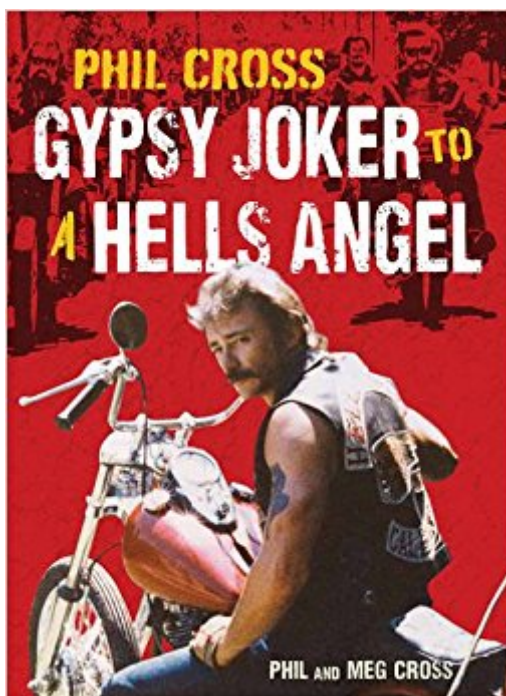


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# Phil Cross: Gypsy Joker To A Hells Angel



## Synopsis

"Phil's new book *A Gypsy Joker To A Hells Angel* is based on 44 years as a Hells Angel. Photos & stories are a must read for all motorcycle riders" - Sonny Barger

In the early 1960s, a young Navy vet, motorcyclist, amateur photographer, and rebel named Phil Cross joined a motorcycle club called the Hells Angels. It turned out to be a bogus chapter of the club that would soon find infamy, so he switched to another club called the Night Riders. Like the bogus chapter of the Hells Angels, this turned out to be a club whose brotherhood was run by a man Mr. Cross describes as "a complete asshole." One day, Mr. Cross stuffed the leader in a ringer-type washing machine and joined a club called the Gypsy Jokers. He started a San Jose chapter of the Jokers and embarked on the most action-packed years of his life. The Jokers were in the midst of a shooting war with the real Hells Angels. The fighting became so intense that the Jokers posted snipers atop their clubhouse. This was a rough time, but it was also the height of the free-love hippie era, and as a young man, Phil enjoyed himself to the fullest. He never let anything as minor as a little jail time stop his fun. Once, while serving time for fighting and fleeing an officer, Phil broke out of jail, entered his bike in a bike show, won the bike show, and broke back into jail before anyone discovered he was missing. Though Phil was tough, he was a certified martial arts instructor, the Angels proved a tough foe. After multiple beating-induced emergency room visits, Mr. Cross decided that if you can't beat 'em, join 'em, so he and most of his club brothers patched over to become the San Jose chapter of the Hells Angels. This book chronicles the life and wild times of Mr. Cross in words and photos.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In the early 1960s, the exploding motorcycle club culture in California attracted a young motorcyclist named Phil Cross, who joined a motorcycle club called the "Hells Angels." It turned out to be a bogus chapter of the club that would soon find infamy, so he switched to another club called the Night Riders. Like the bogus chapter of the Hells Angels, this turned out to be a club run by a man Mr. Cross describes as "a complete asshole." One day Mr. Cross stuffed said complete asshole in a ringer-type washing machine and joined a club called the Gypsy Jokers. He started the San Jose Charter of the Jokers and embarked on the most action-packed years of his life. The Jokers were in the midst of a bloody battle with the real Hells Angels. The fighting became so intense that the Jokers posted snipers atop their clubhouse. Eventually Phil and many of his fellow Jokers realized that the only way to end the battle with the Hells Angels was to become Hells Angels, so most of the San Jose Charter patched over to become the San Jose charter of the Hells Angels. This was a rough time, but it was also the height of the free-love hippie era, and as a young man, Phil enjoyed himself to the fullest. He never let anything as minor as a bit of jail time hinder his fun. Once, while serving time for fighting and fleeing an officer, Phil broke out of jail, entered his bike in a bike show, won the bike show, and broke back into jail before anyone had discovered he was missing. Phil Cross: Gypsy Joker to a Hells Angel tells the story of one man's fifty-plus-year life in the unique, often dangerous, and always exciting culture of the three-patch motorcycle club.

In the early 1960s, Phil Cross, a young navy vet, joined the Gypsy Jokers Motorcycle Club. He started a San Jose charter of the Jokers and embarked on the most action-packed years of his life. The Jokers were in the midst of an all-out war with the Hells Angels. Though Phil was tough—he was a trained martial arts instructor—the Hells Angels proved just as tough. After a beating-induced emergency room visit, Mr. Cross decided that if you can't beat 'em, join 'em, so he and most of his club brothers patched over to become the San Jose charter of the Hells Angels. Phil Cross: Gypsy Joker to a Hells Angel chronicles Cross's life and times in his own words and photos, from his early years with the Gypsy Jokers through his forty-plus-year career as a Hells Angel, a career that led to his being a fugitive on the FBI's most-wanted list (more than once) and a stint in prison. Chronicling both the bad times and the good—and in general he had one hell of a good time—Phil Cross:

Gypsy Joker to a Hells Angel takes the reader on one of the wildest rides ever.

This is an interesting book. It details most of Phil Cross' life as a member of The Gypsy Jokers and then The Hells Angels. The book is not the most well-written piece of literature that I have read, but it's not written by professional writers. There are a lot of typos contained in this book but they don't detract from the interest factor. There are a lot of great pictures of Mr. Cross with each club, maybe too many. Mr. Cross has lived a very eventful life and seems to be the type of guy that you would like to have a few beers with. The only negative that I experienced when reading the book was its sudden ending. Other than that I highly recommend this book to anyone wanting to gain first hand insight to both of these motorcycle clubs.

For those of us who know about motorcycle clubs only via "Sons of Anarchy", this book is the autobiography of someone who has actually lived the life for over 40 years. Phil Cross was, and still is as of the time of publication, a member of the Hell's Angels MC in northern California. This book represents a highly detailed and generally good-natured look at his life experiences. There are a ton of vintage photographs of bikers and bikes and locations across America and the world. This won't be the best-written autobiography you'll ever find. The listed co-author is Phil's wife, and there's not exactly a journalistic veneer to the enterprise. While that would ordinarily be worth deducting a point or two for the purpose of this rating... honestly, it just doesn't matter, here. Phil's experiences in the MC dating back to the late 1960s are entertaining enough that you'll enjoy listening to a world-class raconteur more than you'll be quibbling over phrasings, or paragraph or chapter structure. While not necessarily all of the stories are 100% true (as winked at in both the afterword, and in the very, very carefully written disclaimer on the copyright page), they probably pass the test of being "true enough". Phil has certainly seen some times. He was on the stage at Altamont during the infamous Rolling Stones concert in which an audience member was killed. He describes numerous fight and motorcycle wrecks for the years, and describes too many friends who were killed, in fights or in wrecks. It does get a bit hard to follow him at times -- these are intensely personal stories, and he also makes liberal use of nicknames to describe his ever-changing array of friends and club brothers; it's often hard to relate to a lot of his stories, simply because the who's-who gets confusing. Along the way, Phil also contracts hepatitis, as the result of an ill-advised visit to a tattoo parlor, and survives a bout with cancer. The book portrays him as a fighter, in both the literal and the figurative sense. In the end, the years fly by, but Phil keeps going no matter what life throws his way. While missing the complicating plot structures and theatrically tragic events of a typical "Sons

of Anarchy" season, this is still a pretty compelling book about a uniquely American lifestyle.

I could not put this book down once I started reading it. Phil does an amazing job of transforming the life he lives into words that make you feel like you know him, and I would say to those who do know him they are very lucky to be in the company of such a man! His story was exciting and told of a life I can only dream of. I never felt he lied or made anything up as I have found in other books. He's brutally honest about everything and he has such an optimistic outlook on life that can probably have something to do with his wonderful wife, Meg. You can feel the love he has for her every time he writes about her. They seem to be truly meant for one another and I think in this day and age that's hard to find. I would recommend this book to anyone looking for a good story and incredible people. Thanks for Sharing!!

After reading some earlier reviews, I was in. I'm liking the part about not bashing people from the past, even when it may have been tempting. I like -a lot- the straight up story, because it's better than fiction. It was real good to get the inside story on some people who "went away" but I only heard rumors (Armond) and wondered. But the Pictures! the Bikes! This I relate to the most. Rigid, Frisco Sporty Tank, long Glide, Drag Bars open primaries. On Kindle I can make pictures Big-then dig. (I caught the 125/Hummer Tank w/switch too) Thanks for a good time, and thanks for no bad time. I lived in San Jose, Santa Cruz, behind the Brookdale Lodge, and Eureka. This was great. Thanks, it brought back some memories. I remember the Bike Show -Jail too.

i loved your boo. It seemed to be written by you and your wife, not someone else. Loved all the photos

I found Phil's book to be a very well written book filled with great photos. I highly recommend this one to anyone loving motorcycles and club life. Even though he didn't get into many much about 81, it was still a great read. I'd like to see him do a work of fiction, so he can put down the real crazy life of being a 1%er, and get away with it cause it's written as fiction. Thanks Phil for talking about the G rated part of your life. I'm glad you're still with us to write about it. I'm looking forward to your next book.

very good book.

A recitation of what he's done in his life, written like a laundry list. No insight, and obviously very careful to not incriminate himself.

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