

A Special Gift

To begin this story, we need to climb into [Mr. Peabody's Wayback Machine \(WABAC\)](#).

As we step out of the WABAC, it's clearly 1972. Gas is 36¢ a gallon (\$2.64 adjusted for inflation) and Apollo 16 will soon be on its way to the moon. If, like me, you're a fan of rock music, Led Zeppelin has just released the ZOSO album. Steve McQueen is (and will forever be) the King of Cool. I'm 12 years old and I want a motorcycle.

My parents present a united front against this idea. Publicly anyway. Mom takes me aside and tells me that if I can earn the money to buy the motorcycle, she'll handle the rest. But... don't tell Dad.

I get a job at a driving range picking up golf balls. Yup, I was the entertainment for guys who loved to hit golf balls at the tractor. And this tractor didn't have a cage and there are a few close calls. Thanks guys. Still, I'm 12 and driving a tractor for a living. Very cool. Not McQueen cool but getting there.

At a wage of \$1 per hour, some quick math tells me I should be able to pull this off in three months. Maybe four when I factor in cold soda in glass bottles and a few motorcycle magazines.

By night, I pick up golf balls. By day, I ride my bicycle to local shops to look at motorcycles. Summer vacation just rocks. I somehow avoid concluding that I should drop out of school and do this for the rest of my life.

I finally decide on the object of my moto-lust. A Honda CT70:



Figure 1: Not mine, but you get the idea

After all, you meet the nicest people on a Honda. Besides, the thing just oozes McQueen-level cool. And the salespeople are great, patiently spending time with me. They also do the calculations, so I know how much to save.

On “The Day”, Mom cons Dad into using his green Chevy C10 pickup. In the right light, the truck is eerily similar in color to the Honda.

At the shop, Mom sits with me at the desk. I’d already been to the bank and converted a stack of \$1, \$5, and \$10 bills into something easier to count.

The final price is \$365 (\$2661 adjusted for inflation). As I pull out the bank envelope to pay, I hear my Mom say “Put your money away” just before writing a check for my first motorcycle.

Thanks Mom. All these years later, I still ride and it’s still a passion. That little Honda spawned more motorcycles and many adventures. Each ride is unique and thrilling. Your gift to me was, and is, truly special.