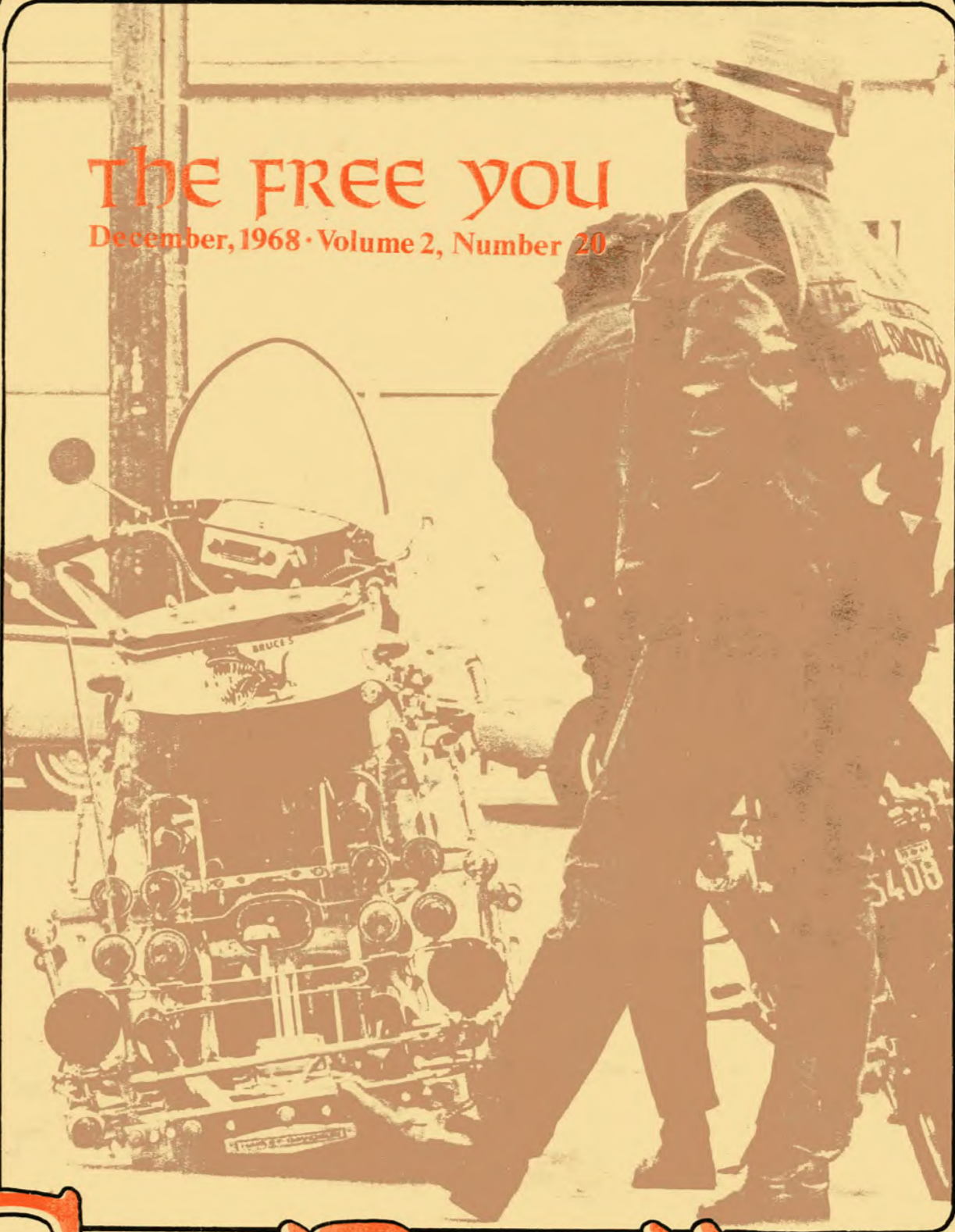


The FREE you  
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# Soul Brothers

# This is real dig it

The orange and black colors showed up first at be-ins and other large gatherings. We could see the bikes cruising our streets and rolling down the freeway; we could see that something new was happening, but nobody seemed to know too much about the men who wear the colors or what their trip actually is.

You are witnessing a verbographic-photo project on the Soul Brothers. They ride motorcycles. All kinds of motorcycles--titanic Harley '74s jumping straight from psycho-scientific epics by William S. Burroughs to long lean snake machines that dazzle the eye and give the Angels something to think about.

The word is loose. Describing a state of being and also a way of life: it's the kind of feeling you get walking into the Happy Five from the fading afternoon sun. The Happy Five serves as headquarters and social stomping grounds; it's a cavernous, dimly lit, lazyfriendly kind of place on University Avenue in East Paly. You step up to the bar; there's a few of the brothers shooting pool and sipping beer; Aretha is wailing out of the juke box; some beautiful black chicks slide in and out occasionally: the bikes are out front, one straight line, wheels turned to the East.

Behind the bar sits the moving force of the club, a man named Heavy. He is. His official title is Road Captain and this afternoon's discourse covers--

## bikes

Man, we had a cat called Grapes.  
Yeh, that's his name. His  
real name is Elroy;  
but that man  
couldn't walk out  
his door without gettin' drunk.  
Well he finally bought  
himself a Harley 74 and  
he ain't took a drink since.  
Havin' a bike is better than  
booze: Soul Brothers turned  
his head--and that's truth, solid.

## soul

Soul is just bein' for real man.  
Bein' upfront. Dude comes  
in here, he comes of  
his own free will.  
And when he comes in, we together.  
Everybody has soul. Some  
just have to dig a  
little harder  
to find it.

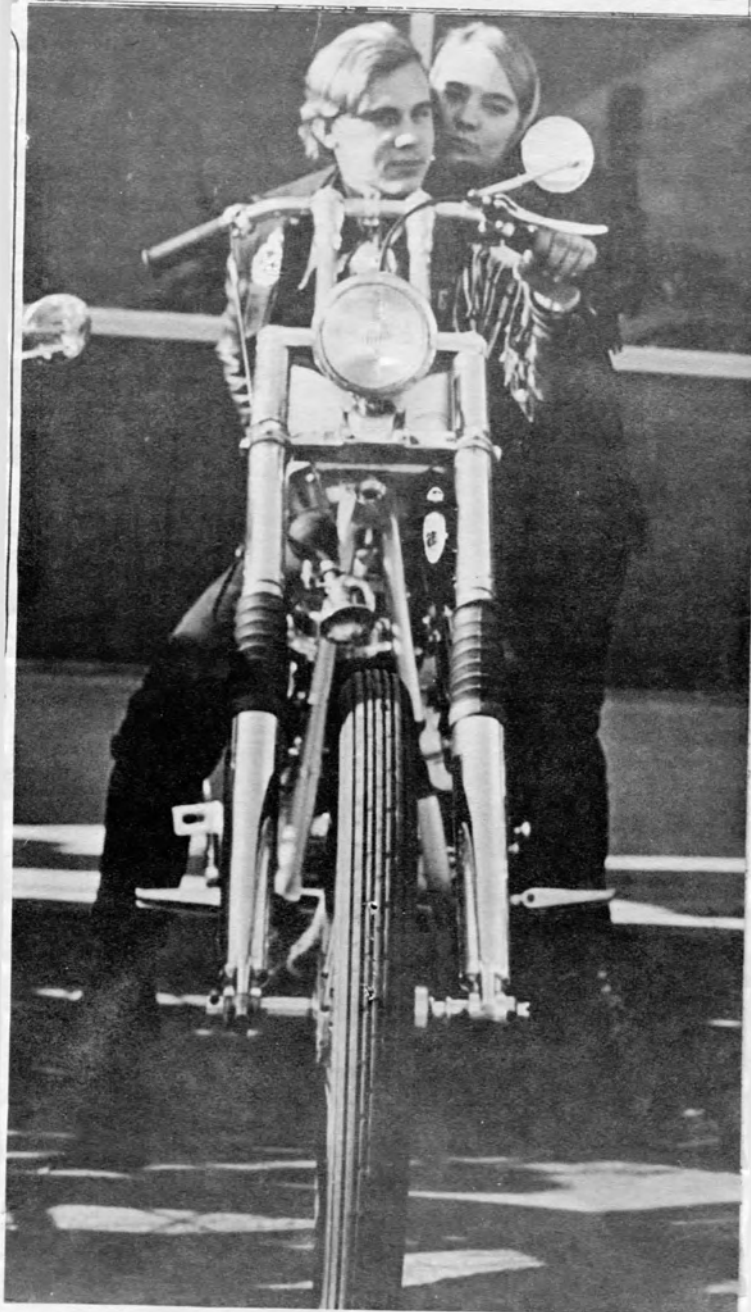


Both soul and bikes are available in large quantities with the Soul Brothers; they ride as a mixed club--blacks and greys moving side by side. These are warm, righteous people who dig motorcycles and dig each other. A bit of fast talking and an ounce of care have served to keep the Man in his place; and relations with other cycle clubs are cordial. No hassles is the order of the day.

THE FREE YOU



**soul brother**







Part One: The Run

The Brothers and their women assemble in the middle of a Sunday morning. Weather is fine, riders feel the same. Good day for a run.

It's a conglomerate tribal mixture meeting outside the Happy Five:  
black leather, fringed buckskins, levis, Luftwaffe headbands,  
chrome and steel/

a chorus of engines grumbling  
hair and beards stirring in the wind  
legs astride metal horses  
feet planted firmly on the asphalt.

"Get 'em up, move 'em out!"

The sound of drums is heard on the Bayshore Freeway, guttural poundings that race and swim inside the body; syncopated rhythms turning in the bloodstream, dancing. Individual riders throb into one roaring organism, responding by feel rather than sight to the loose hand signals of the Road Captain.

Twenty-six machines moving in three dimensions; peeling off in midflight like a great flock of eagles, reforming in another part of the sky.





Part Two: The Silverstudded Phantom causes the Greyflannel Dwarf to Scream

There's a good shepherd riding at the tail of the single body: he straddles his ton of mobile steel like he was sitting down to breakfast; the machine jumps to do his bidding--cutting intruding vehicles out of the line like a cowboy cuts out cows. Occasionally he relaxes, leans back in the saddle, arms folded, serene smile; perfectly at ease at 65 m.p.h.

Formations change: lane to lane, fall back, regroup; passing cars full of pasty faces studiously looking the other way, cars full of children, marveling.

Into the City through freeway half-tunnels, engine roar strangling all noise; up Fell St. and down into Fillmore. Down into worlds of storefront churches, folks frowning at the noise or smiling and waving; windows full of Huey Newton and Eldridge; worlds of bar-be-que ribs and empty wine bottles: time out foe a visit with the Rattlers M.C. Time out for a little something to warm the body, catch the breath and move...

...Out of the ghetto and across the Golden Gate, descending in tight formation on Sausalito (tourists struggling to keep their cool...losing badly) cameras flying to every photog's eye, dials twiddling.

Half a block is enough for parking: quick maneuverings of masses of steel for space (one long line, wheels pointing East); fast talk with the local gendarmes, just promise to feed the parking meters and everything mellows.

So slide downstreet, let's see what we can get into brother.

Sunday afternoon Sausalito. We're strollin' around in a town that locks it's parks and sees fit to outlaw the public consumption of beer. Boats on the water back up cycles on the pier; pretty girls to strike up conversations with; friendly gab with interested townsfolk; posing and goofing, a few pictures for the folk back home in Idaho.

Part Three: This Wheel's on Fire...



Part Four: It's only the Roadrunner, baby,  
hollerin' as he flies...

Kick the starter once again: over the Richmond Bridge--  
fading sun and steel girders lay shadow mosaics  
on leather shoulders, easy riders, upturned faces.

Move in on Oakland, little black kids running to the roadside,  
watch in awe as living folk heroes thunder by...

The Soul Brothers.  
They ride in close formation,  
one lane wide,  
one brotherhood long.



# this is real Dig It

