



# **Uncut Edition: Cycling, Wine, and Men**

**A Midlife Tour de France**

**By Nancy Brook**

This material is protected under the US Copyright Act of 1976 and all other applicable international, federal, state and local laws, and all rights are reserved, including resale rights: you are not allowed to give or sell this book to anyone else. If anyone else would like to see a copy of the chapters provided in this document, please direct them to the web site <http://www.nancybrook.com>.

Much of this publication is based on personal experience although some names and situations have been changed to preserve privacy.

Any trademarks, service marks, product names or named features are assumed to be the property of their respective owners, and are used only for reference. There is no implied endorsement if we use one of these terms.

Copyright © 2010 Nancy Brook. All rights reserved worldwide.

Your Feedback on the book is welcome. Please contact Nancy Brook with your comments.

[nancy@nancybrook.com](mailto:nancy@nancybrook.com)

<http://www.nancybrook.com>

## Uncut Chapter 1



### *The Great Elevator Escape*

My ex-boyfriend Jim begged me to have a drink with him while I was in his town attending class. He had hoped that I would take him back a third time and resume our long distance relationship. We broke up the first time when he admitted that there was someone else – some hussy he had met when he was out drinking. We reunited for a while, and I broke up with him again when I suspected his cheating ways continued – though I never knew for sure.

At this point I wasn't bitter that he had slept around with these bar tramps – OK, maybe a little. Mainly, I just wanted to know the truth. Was there really only the one woman? Or were there more as I assumed? The only way I could to know for sure was to use my most charming demeanor to lull him into believing that I might take him back if he would only tell me the truth.

Jim was supposed to meet me at the Holiday Inn Bar at 7. He showed up at 7:20 – drunk. His eyes were bloodshot and his speech slurred when he ordered a glass of wine. I didn't mind his inebriation – alcohol can be a remarkable truth serum. I was sober, sipping on my first glass of wine while I waited for him to show up.

He wasted no time on pleasantries, getting right into his effort to win me back.

“I really miss you. You are the love of my life,” he said, as he had many time before. I was amazed that I had fallen for this crap more than once.

I didn't want his slick lines to stick to me this time, so I kept my distance both physically and emotionally. Yet, I had to encourage him so he would continue opening up, so I smiled and nodded as he talked.

He told me about how he was confused because his business had been doing so poorly, and he had pushed me away because of it. I wasn't buying it.

"Come on, Jim. Tell me the truth. You cheated on me more than once, didn't you?" I said this in a very calm voice, continuing to smile.

"Well, yes, there were a few other times," he admitted. He ordered another glass of wine.

I asked him for details, and he told me all. The anger welled within me as I heard about five other women, and it was all I could do to stop myself from reaching across the table and punching his head. But I controlled myself and maintained a calm exterior until he finished.

When he stopped talking, I pushed out of my chair and said, "I'm leaving." I planned a grand exit, like a star in one of those 1940s movies. Instead, I was flustered and couldn't remember where to find the elevator from the bar.

Jim followed me out, and I started feeling nervous that I wasn't going to get away. Maybe I'd have to punch him after all. Instead, I asked, "Where's the elevator?"

He didn't answer. "What's the matter," he said.

"I need to go – just tell me where the elevator is."

I was starting to panic. To the right I saw the stairs. I am a runner, and I thought I could beat him up the stairs to the lobby and find the elevator from there. He was drunk tonight and not so athletic in general.

As I assessed the sprint upstairs, I saw a sign with an arrow pointing out the elevators, and I quickly walked in that direction. Jim followed.

“Nancy, I love you. Let me come with you.”

“You pay the bill, and I’m going up to my room,” I said as I stepped into the hotel elevator.

Jim wasn’t so easily swayed, and he stepped in the elevator with me.

“I want to come with you,” he said.

“No. You have to pay the bill,” I said. This time I didn’t wait for his response, and I pushed him out the door. This wasn’t an easy task. Jim weighed over 220 pounds. I quickly pushed the button to my floor, and as the door closed, I heard him pound his fists on the outside of the elevator.

“Fuck,” he said.

I danced a little jig as the elevator went up, reveling in my escape. My celebration was premature. Jim was still in pursuit.

The phone rang shortly after I arrived in my room. It was Jim calling from the hotel lobby asking if he could come up. I told him no and hung up. He called my cell phone. I let the call go to voicemail.

In the morning I saw a note under my windshield wiper. The words were written in a drunken scrawl and said, “I love you.” I ripped it up, and threw the scraps in the parking lot.

## Uncut Chapter 2



### Three Men and A Biker Chick

I'm a biker chick. Not the kind who wears chaps, leather boots and rides on Harleys. I'm the kind of biker chick who wears padded shorts, shoes with cleats and pedals my Trek.

One fall when I went on first dates with some new online matches, my love for cycling gushed out in our conversations. None of the men I met were cyclists, but after one date, all were ready to pedal off into the sunset with me.

I met my last boyfriend when I began my cycling odyssey this past spring. Jeff is an addicted workout nut and cycling is his substance of choice. I was new to road biking when I met him. Jeff and his friends were so much stronger than I, but I pushed myself to ride with them. Within two months of riding outdoors, I had logged my first century ride (100 miles in one day). Soon I was keeping up with them on our long rides. While our relationship fizzled, my love for cycling grew.

Since cycling takes up such a big chunk of my free time, I knew that if I wanted to spend any time with a new beau, he must cycle. The problem was that all of the men I met weren't cyclist.

My first date was Seth. Seth was a tall, younger, Southern man with a thick Tennessee accent. We met for our first date at Perkins on Labor Day evening. I expressed my passion for biking, and he seemed mesmerized. "That sounds like a lot of fun," he drawled.

After our date, he emailed me every day inviting me to call him. I didn't have time. It was fall in Montana and the Indian summer weather meant cycling was still on. A week later, he was ready to make a commitment. He was going to sell his motorcycle and buy a road bike.

Would I help him pick one out?

In a word – no. I had biking to do.

Next I dated Henry, a marathon runner from Livingston. Here was a man who would certainly have stamina to keep up with me – and he had a road bike already! I was thrilled and optimistic when he wanted to cycle on our first date – despite the fact that he would be racing in a half marathon the next day.

He showed up with a yellow Trek road bike and wore “real” bike clothes. (It's a good sign when someone owns a bike jersey and bike shorts!) His blue, green and yellow jersey was from a ride in Yellowstone Park. Our plan was to bike about 40 miles. We would take the back roads from Billings to Park City and back. We were faced with a head wind while cycling. I let him pull (that means he lead and blocked the wind for me) all the way to Park City. On the way back, a tail wind pushed us home. I felt myself accelerate, and I wanted to fly. I pedaled faster and faster. 20, 22, 24, 26 miles per hour. The wind surged past my ears and a beautiful humming sound accompanied the steady rhythm of my breath. I forgot about my date until I neared Laurel (seven miles from the turnaround). I stopped pedaling and coasted as I turned my head to look for Henry. He was nowhere in sight. I didn't care. I resumed pedaling as fast as I could the rest of the way to Laurel and then waited for him to catch up. “I saw you take off, but I

just couldn't catch you." Apparently running boy's legs didn't spin as fast as mine. We rode at a slower pace from Laurel to Billings.

Henry and I dated once more, but it was never the same.

Eric was my final online date. He was a good conversationalist, intelligent and deep. On our first date, Eric said that he had been inactive for years but had started working out about six months before. He said that when he was younger, he loved to cycle, but hadn't done so in years. After our second date, he told me that he had found a bike on E-Bay for under \$300. It was some steel bike with a brand name that I didn't recognize. "It's a real bargain!" he said.

Anyone involved in the sport of cycling knows that it's not a "bargain" sport. What would Eric do next? Buy a jersey at the Goodwill? Find his bike shoes at Play-It-Again Sports? Fill his water bottles with tap water instead of high performance, low glucose sports drink? This was madness, I knew, and I gave him the e-dump.

A week later, he emailed me with a photo of his "new" bike. It was handsome, with red and black coloring. It looked to be in good shape. Then I saw the pedals – regular pedals. He didn't even own bike shoes! I never responded to the email.

I've given up on finding a match online. Tall, athletic and intelligent are wonderful qualities in a man. What I want a man who has a bike, can keep up with me on rides and knows that "bike" and "bargain" don't go together in the Henry sentence. A biker chick like me needs a biker guy. Until I find him, I'll take solace in the open road.

## Uncut Edition Chapter 3



### Must Love Bears?

After breaking up with my latest boyfriend four years ago, I decided the best way to stop moping about him was to start dating new men. Internet dating provided the perfect opportunity to start finding someone new.

I had Internet dated before, and I always had plenty of winks and emails. The problem was I didn't want to date many of these men. I longed for the whole package—someone near my age, smart, accomplished, handsome, athletic and fun.

Dirk seemed perfect. He was cute, smart, funny, easy to talk to and very interested in me. At that time, I had dates lined up with three other match men, but Dirk was the only one who kept my interest. The night before I met Dirk, I had a date with a handsome chiropractor, but I couldn't keep my attention on him. (Maybe it was the dark glasses he wore throughout our dinner.)

I cut the evening short with the doctor and rose at the crack of dawn the next day to meet Dirk at West Yellowstone, which was a four-hour drive for me. We talked on our cell phones the whole way over. I couldn't wait to meet him in person! But when I saw him, I was very surprised. He was short, barrel-chested, thick-necked and much less attractive than he appeared on his online photo.

*Come on, Nancy. You are being shallow. I told myself. You liked him on the phone. Just look past the physical appearance.*

“Hi!” he said enthusiastically, and gave me a big hug with his stubby arms.

I smiled and hugged him back.

We stopped by the grocery store for a picnic lunch of sandwiches and wine. We drove into the park and ate by a creek, lying on a picnic blanket. After our lunch, he reached over and kissed me.

It was the most horrible kiss I could have imagined. The kiss that didn't end – kind of like a vacuum hose sucking my lips. I wanted to run as far away from Dirk as possible, but I knew that would hurt his feelings. Besides, if I took off, I'd have to run miles since Dirk had driven us into the park and my car was back at the grocery store. Instead, I suggested we see the sites around Yellowstone.

“Let's go see Old Faithful,” I said. With throngs of tourists I wouldn't be forced alone with him and could avoid more sloppy kisses.

He liked the idea, and soon we were traveling east to the Park's most famous geyser. On the way over, he talked about our future. I could move in with him and help him with his bear hunting business. (Never mind that I despise sport hunting.) There was no need for me to work. He made enough money for both of us. I heard pop Christian music playing in the background as a big grin spread across his face as he fanaticized about our life together.

Dirk was not only unattractive but crazy. I needed to get away from the bear man but now we were heading further into the park and away from my car.

When we arrived at Old Faithful, we got out of his pickup, and he reached over to hold my hand. I felt ridiculous with him. I wore sandals with an inch and a half heels and I towered over him. He didn't mind, reaching for my hand as we walked toward Old Faithful. Fortunately, I had my camcorder with me, and I feigned interest in the erupting geyser, giving me an excuse to escape his sweaty grasp.

Dirk could feel my shift in attitude, and after we walked back to the car, he asked me what was wrong. I didn't have the heart to tell him that he grossed me out. I just said that I was taking in the sights, and I needed time to reflect. After all, I was stuck in Yellowstone Park with him, and my car was at least 50 miles away.

We drove down the road and stopped to take pictures of some baby buffalo. When the photo session ended, I decided I couldn't take any more time with him.

"I'm ready to go back," I said.

"Already?" he said.

"Yeah – it's going to be a long drive back to Billings, and I want to get started."

We turned back to West Yellowstone in silence. I could tell he was troubled. A scowl creased his forehead, his mouth turned down around the corner and he didn't say a word. I stayed on my side of the truck, avoiding any additional contact with him.

When we arrived back at West Yellowstone, I wanted to leap out of his truck and spring to my car. I kept my cool. I opened the door, grabbed my camera bag and smiled at Dirk.

"It was nice to meet you," I said.

"I get the feeling that I'm never going to see you again," he said.

“Well, one never knows what the future has in store,” I answered.

I gave him a quick hug and power walked to my vehicle. I got into the car, started it and peeled out, waving as I left. I was free at last.

Lesson learned: It’s better to mope at home about an old boyfriend than be trapped in a pickup with a new crazy bear man.