

INTERROGATION

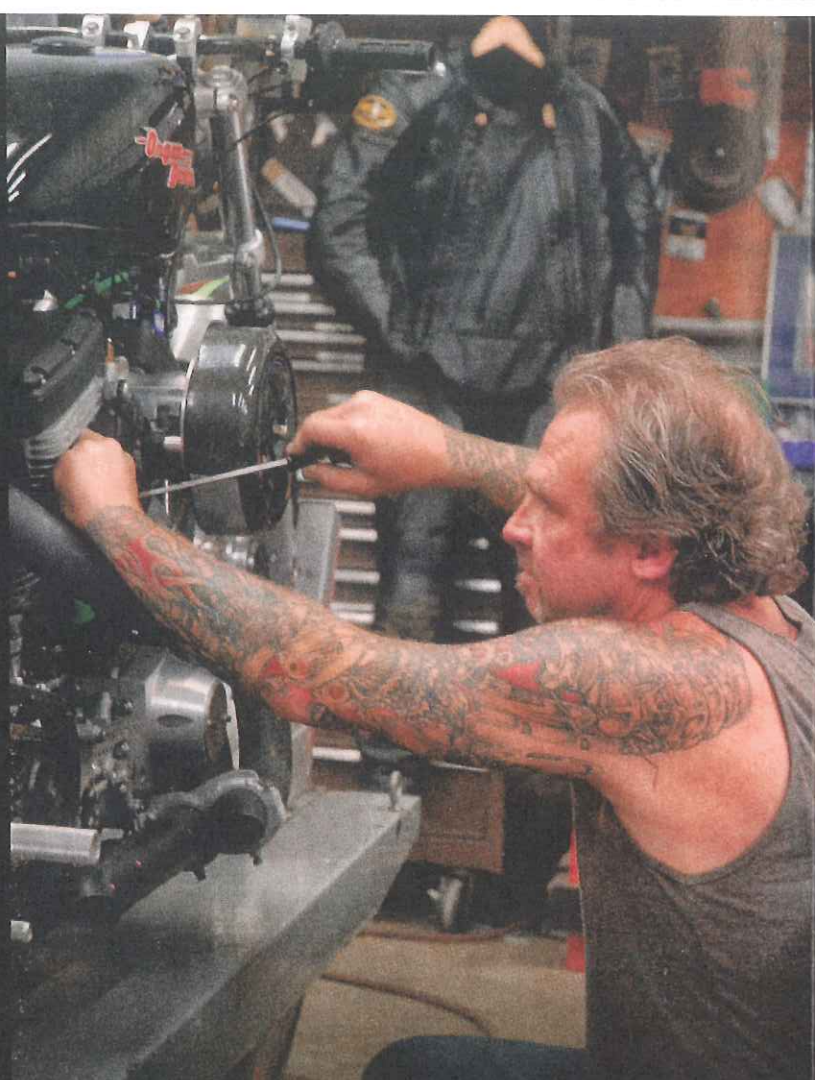
BERT "EFFIN" BAKER

ADJUSTING PUSHRODS

I adjusted my first set of pushrods this past weekend. Yeah, that's right, Elmer. Bert "Effin" Baker just adjusted his first set of pushrods after being on the planet for 52 years. To set the record straight, I think I adjusted some pushrods 20 years ago on Schmidt's 1992 Fat Boy, but that was at 4:30 in the morning, and I can't exactly recall the details. Those long nights at the Christian Science reading room and helping old ladies cross the street can have a harmful effect on one's memory. Trannies (not the ones with a johnson and store-bought fun bags) are kinda my deal. I don't care about motors; gears and torque multiplication are my "thang," so that's my sole focus at my day job. I've always had someone do my motor work, but quite often I would ask myself, "Are my pushrods adjusted correctly?" Particularly after I hear some kind of tick-tick noise coming from the right side of my motor.

My resident motor man, James Simonelli, was out of town, and I needed to put a new set of lifters and pushrods in my little scooter engine. Installing the adjustable pushrods meant I had to (correctly) adjust those four sticks of steel. Adjusting pushrods is a bit like skydiving in that, if done correctly, the task is relatively simple and will yield the desired results. If done incorrectly, valves crash into the pistons just like your legs might snap off when they hit the ground. So I did a search on the Internet to school myself on pushrod adjustment. Spoiler alert: Not everything you read on the Internet is factual, so researching this subject from multiple sources was mandatory. One of the most informative videos I found was the S&S video hosted by Justin Bramstedt. His video is straightforward and very informative. It gave all the necessary tips and tricks to do the job correctly. Justin probably won't be displacing Brad Pitt in Hollywood anytime soon, but I didn't watch the video to be entertained; I watched it to gather facts, and he does a darn good job at that.

The neat thing about motorcycles is that the engine, transmission, brakes, shocks, and chassis are all visible. American V-twin motorcycles stand above all others because they are mechanically intuitive. If you have more than an ounce of mechanical aptitude and a decent set of tools, you are fully capable of doing all maintenance and modifications, provided you take the time to research the subject. If you



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don't know which end of a wrench to hold, you should promptly sell your motorcycle and throw this magazine in the trash. After that, make a beeline to your local bookseller and purchase the latest issue of *GQ* (Gentlemen's Quarterly) and *TnT* (Tennis-n-Tampons).

So how did I do? I did fine after double- and triple-checking all the steps. Truth be told, I ended up removing the spark plugs and snatching off the exhaust and carburetor so I could shine a flashlight down the plug hole and redundantly confirm that I collapsed the lifters down correctly without opening the valves before the pushrods were adjusted. The biggest tip I can offer from my experience is that I really liked the rubber-band trick for holding up the pushrod tube keepers. I had always seen people do the clothespin trick to hold the keepers up, but I found the rubber-band trick to be less cumbersome and easier to maneuver around. The motor runs like a freight train, and there was a complete absence of scary valve-train noise. **The moral to the story is this: Stepping out of your comfort zone and doing your own work will give you a sense of accomplishment and bring you closer to your machine thereby elevating your love affair with your machine. HB**

At Suzuki, we work every time to be safe and enjoyable. So always wear a helmet, use proper riding and acceleration control. Never ride under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Avoid excessive speed. Always engage in stumpy riding. Study your owner's manual and always respect your weight limits. For the complete safety information, visit us at www.suzuki.com.