

BARRY STORM  
NOTES ON BARRY STORM

For the record, the following story about <sup>BARRY STORM</sup> ~~Barry Storm~~ <sup>describing</sup> ~~himself~~ his personality.

In 1955 my mining partner, Dick Davy, and I relocated our tungsten mill from the Kaweah River (western outlet of Sequoia National Park) to a point four miles north of Inyo-Kern on the high desert east of the Sierra Nevadas. We had run out of ore and this section of the Sierras looked quite promising. Our new site was on a railroad, a paved highway, and our truck haul was downhill from the mines.

In re-erecting the mill, we had a crew of five including the foreman, Grant Crow, and Barry Storm. Storm needed some ready cash and one place in the desert was as good to live in as another. He certainly was unfit for civilized living! (My wife, Mary, can bear witness. A week of his presence once at our home and she was almost psycho!)

We quartered our crew in one of two shacks about 400 yards from the mill site, the only housing for miles around. The second house was inhabited by a Mexican and his family. He had a water well, a garden and the usual chickens.

Storm was not used to company but got along well enough with the crew although they were continually amused (and amazed) at his erratic actions and odd personality. Storm had never been housebroke. If he finished frying a steak he would spear it and drip the grease over the floor enroute to his plate on the table. It just didn't occur to him to bring the plate to the stove.

On Saturdays, miners normally hit the nearest town for the weekly bust. Storm usually stayed in camp, not being used to such robust living (at that time). One Saturday, Crow and his crew returned to camp quite late. His headlights picked up the Mexican neighbor who had a Winchester cradled in his arms. Crow stopped to talk.

"Senor, you have a crazy man!"

"What do you mean? What's happened?"

The Mexican explained that after sundown he heard strange conversations from the other house, dog's barking, women talking, etc. and all with Storm the only person present. Once Storm came blasting out of the screen door and began firing his .38 Smith & Wesson in the dark, across the desert, even at the moon, and all of this time snarling in his high pitched voice.

The Mexican then gathered his children and wife and kept them in his house. He checked his chicken pen and put the mule in the barn. He brought out his Winchester and sat on this front step until Crow arrived. (Storm's racket had gone on for hours.)

Crow laughed and explained that Storm was not really crazy. That he was an author and a script writer for a Hollywood Studio. That, as a would-be playwright, it was his habit to act out the characters in his plays and to imitate their voices. This acting bit was normally little problem for Storm as he habitually lived alone and his gyrations were beyond the ken of other people. The Mexican, being mollified finally went to bed.

In later years, I have been out to Pinto Basin several times, usually with a troop of Boy Scouts in tow. I always make it a point to visit Barry at his claims. He hasn't changed. This vast basin, except for the portion containing Storm's claims, is part of the Joshua Tree National Monument and is controlled by the Forest Service. On my first visit since Storm's arrival, I asked a Ranger the directions to his claims and whether he knew of him. I will never forget the startled look in his eyes and his slow grin when he assured me that the entire Forest Service knew of Barry, as well as most of the people in Twenty-Nine Palms, about fifty miles away.

(MARLOW'S DAUGHTER WAS A BARBER IN 29 PALMS)

Storm has a 10% Army medical discharge although without overseas service. These few dollars, along with income from his rarely published articles and his jade sales, keep him in kerosene, beans and beer. His abode is an abandoned mine drift in which he has placed a spring bed at a wide point of the tunnel. He installed a door at

the entrance. The tunnel has natural ventilation thru an old "raise" to the surface. A large crate covered with plywood serves as a desk and table. Thus, I might say, he comes as close to being a caveman as anyone I have known, and I have seen a few.