

# Dougal Bain

## Texas Odyssey

The news at the Eagle Pass Bus Station was as depressing as the town itself. There were no buses out until the next morning. Christie was adamant that we were not spending the night. A local looking guy in a stained T-shirt, tracksuit pants and shoulder length hair walks up to us and asks if we want to go to San Antonio because he's going there for work.

"Just pay for my fuel."

"Sounds great," says Christie.

I had yet to appreciate the depth of her disdain for Eagle Pass. It was deep enough to get into a car and travel a couple of hundred miles into the night with a man we don't know apparently. I stood there open mouthed for a second then shoulder my pack and follow them to a light blue 70's Chevy pickup.

On the way out of town we pulled into a gas station. Our driver adds two four-packs of 32oz Pabst blue ribbon cans, approximately 16pints! We pay for the gas and the beer; apparently "fuel" applies to both driver and truck. Back in the truck we each crack a can. He downs his, tosses the can out the window and cracks another one.

Moses has been visiting family in Mexico and needs to get back to San Antonio but has no money. The pickup is going painfully slowly, vehicles flying by us on the highway. Moses is six pints into the trip when we pull off the road for a comfort stop.

Christie says to me.

"Have you noticed how perfect skin and his eye-brows are?"

"Nooooo...he has got shiny hair though.....huh!?"

I notice a large pyramid of empty beer cans in the truck's tray, I guess about a fortnight of beer consumption.

So he hadn't been throwing his beer cans out into the pristine desert. I felt a burst of bonhomie towards this eco-warrior.

I show Christie the pyramid and she seems suitably impressed.

Back in the truck I can't help but notice how well Moses is manicured, despite his greasy clothes. After a couple of subtle nudges from Christie, and through a circuitous conversation about The Dallas Cowboys and other manly Texas pursuits, we work the conversation around to the fact that Australia has the biggest gay pride march in the world and that we like gay folk.

Moses not very gradually transforms. He gushes about his job as a drag queen in San Antonio. That's why he needs to get back. He's "got a fabulous show he needs to rehearse."

We pull into a literal hole in the wall pizza joint. Moses leaves for the "little gal's room" Christie says:

"Oh my God he is all over the road"

"Is he?" I am four pints in at this stage.

"Yeah, do you think he'll let me drive?"

"Ask him."

Moses thinks it's a great idea. We squeeze into the cab and as Christie pulled out Moses cracked another one and promptly fell asleep.

The cars flew past us for a while. Christie gestured to the steering wheel.

"The steering is fucked" she whisper-shouts in my ear.

"Do you wanna stop?"

"I'll keep going for a while. He's actually been doing really well to keep it as straight as he has."

Suddenly there are blue and red lights flashing behind us.

"Oh shit it's the police! I'm pulling over"

As Christie turns the wheel something gives under the hood and we skid off into a stop 10 metres into the Mesquite...for a full 2 seconds there's just blue and red flashing...**and then all hell broke loose!**