

AMERICAN IRON LIBRARY BY SAM WHITEHEAD

INDIAN LARRY

A tribute to the chopper shaman



WEBSTER'S DEFINES A SHAMAN AS "A PRIEST OR medicine man, especially among North Asian peoples, who is believed to be able to heal and to foretell the future through communication with good and evil spirits." Fair enough.

Dave Nichols, editor of *Easyriders* and *V-Twin* magazines calls his latest book *Indian Larry: Chopper Shaman* (\$24.95). That title alone suggests the overwhelming degree of reverence the author has for his subject. It also makes clear that Nichols intends to place Indian Larry DeSmedt on a mystical pedestal. But don't let that deter you from checking out this intriguing paean to a New York legend.

"Indian Larry's life follows the pattern of a mythic tale," writes Nichols. "It is the archetypal story of a man with a thousand faces, an ordinary man much like you or me but whose life led him on an extraordinary adventure. In

his time he was a jester-thief, a warrior-prince, a lover-king, a wizard-shaman, a sideshow-enigma, an artist with metal, a stuntman, a mentor, a heroic celebrity, and much more. In his lifetime, Larry DeSmedt played every part and role in the human pageant." Got

all that?

To illustrate Larry's role in the pageant, Nichols frames his star's life in the context of an ancient hero's journey as defined by the brilliant writer/philosopher Joseph Campbell in his book *Hero with a Thousand Faces*. It's an unusual womb-to-tomb peppered with the voices of many who loved Larry and understand the extraordinary life he lived. Hovering at (or at least near) the top of this list is Larry's wife, Andrea "Bambi" Cambridge (she shares writer credits with Nichols). And no book on Larry (or any Harley madman, for that matter) would be complete without Michael Lichter's marvelous photography. It all makes for a fitting tribute to a revered character.

The chopper shaman is dead. Long live the chopper shaman. AIM

SOURCES

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