



# CRUISIN' CY

**D**arkness falls on CY Avenue and the kids aren't home.

They are out tonight in souped up Malibus, Fairlanes and Camaros. They drive huge pickup trucks with mudders or beat-up work trucks handed down from the old man. Some are in brand-new Honda CRX's with temporary plates and others drive whatever they can, regardless of the condition. Most prefer American made cars — Chevys, Fords — the louder and faster the better.

This is the strip, three miles of CY between Smith's Food & Drug and the Conoco C-Plus convenience store. The road, of course, extends out into the darkness from east to west, but most of the action is in that three-mile stretch where on Friday nights the world is small and focused.

Here there exists a subculture of youth that hang out all night, run from cops, stand around, drink pop, listen to heavy metal music, race each other, check their looks, drink beer and "CLC" (Lord Calvert Canadian whisky), get bored and finally go home.

The strip is about movement. Cars move from parking lot to parking lot. They'll start at Smith's Food gathering like a swarm of flies until the headlights form a single beam. The cars multiply and soon everyone is getting out of their cars, breaking into cliques, laughing, yelling, and always looking for cops.

"Have you heard of any parties," one tall, skinny kid asks. He has long dark hair and wears a black Metallica T-shirt, shorts and high-top basketball shoes, the standard outfit for a heavy-metal hotrodder. Others wear baseball caps and flannel shirts with jeans and boots. Girls wear pastels and a lot of make-up or black jeans and blouses with teased hair.

The boys talk with bravado and the girls listen and laugh. Everyone seems to be tense, however, each waiting for the inevitable to occur. Suddenly, two white Casper police cars



**Jason Henderson makes his own statement somewhere on CY.**

move in behind the crowd. They don't turn on their lights, they don't make any announcements. They don't have to.

Fifty engines roar to life and the nucleus of cars splinters into a thousand pieces. Some move to the Albenson's parking lot, others find refuge in the tree-lined lot at Safeway. The fast cars move out onto CY, looking for a place to compete. Many simply choose to "cruise" the strip, sliding their cars up to those driven by the opposite sex to give THE LOOK and yell clumsy propositions.

"Did you see that chick cog?" one guy asks

his peers at the C-Plus store. "She poured beer on my car, man!" A group has gathered at the store to map out some sort of strategy, but nobody has any new ideas.

Many of these kids are out looking for trouble, and their drunken driving and love of speed warrant the constant police surveillance. But many do not want to be here.

John, 16, says he cruises the strip because there is nothing else for his generation — kids between 16 and 20 — to do. "We just want a place where we can listen to some jams, you know. Somewhere the police won't bother us."

Kathy, 19, is from San Diego where she says there are many places teenagers can go to avoid the tired cycle of parties and drinking.

"A lot of us like to dance, so it would be great to have a teen club where bands could play and stuff," she says.

A loud crash interrupts the somewhat relaxed atmosphere and everyone looks toward the CY and Poplar intersection where a green Volkswagen has just rear-ended two unsuspecting motorists.

"Mario, yeah!" a blonde girl yells to the driver of the VW. "He's a little bit lost. All he needs is a brain," she says.

About five boys quickly run out to the intersection and push Mario's crumpled Beetle into the darkness. The other two drivers check their cars and slowly drive off. Soon traffic resumes, leaving nothing but a pile broken glass as evidence of the wreck.

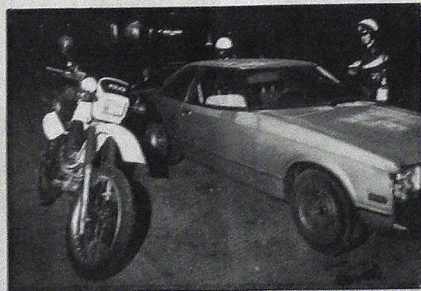
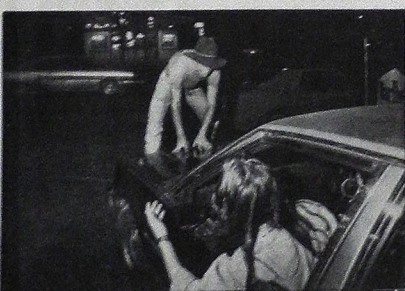
A police car pulls up, looking for what five minutes ago was a traffic accident. The kids at C-Plus pile into their cars and prepare to move out onto the strip to search for yet another brief sanctuary.

"Yeah, this gets pretty old," one says before ducking into a blue Ford Fairlane. The engine roars and the car disappears into the lights of CY Avenue, heading toward Smith's to start all over again.



**Cruisers gather in front of the C-Plus store.**

**Photos by Greg Peters Text by David Eisenhauer**



**Parking lots along CY are loaded with action for teen-agers who decide to get out of their cars and off of the strip on a typical Friday or Saturday night.**