

The day I rolled through town for a job interview,

the streets were crawling with what I described to my college girlfriends as “hockey-haired hotties”. It was the Fall of 2002, so young men were literally sitting on rooftops and clinging to ladders like monkeys in a very large, wild west-motif zoo exhibit, just hammering and painting away since everyone still had money for remodels and new construction.

Before I headed home to Denver, I stopped at pretty much the last ski and bike shop before you get on I-70, to apply for a job as a Ski Tech.

I had one of those, “we’re just needing a reasonably intelligent warm body so you’ll do”-interviews. The hiring manager offered me the job, but I didn’t take it because they didn’t offer health insurance. I’d find out later that in most cases around the County, if your private employer lets you take the time to walk to the post office, it counts as both your health plan and their contribution.

The hiring manager was also a life-loving dream-chasing “Race Car Driver”. Makes sense, right? Middle of the Rocky Mountains, miles from any track.

We began dating and the promise of open-road adventures all across the country...oh, and wine, lots of wine...acted like the green glowing light in Disney’s “Sleeping Beauty, calling me to a future I don’t think I would have picked for myself. We got married.

Then he was laid off. Then he embarked on racing in a professional-level, country-wide, road-track racing series.

Obviously, financial drive and responsibility were barely a passing blip on my “characteristics to look for in a man” radar. There is a saying--how do you make a small fortune in racing? You start with a big one.

His family’s passion is cars, much like a family living in the Indian slums having a passion for Faberge eggs and fine wine. I grew up drinking powdered milk with home-sewn clothes hung on a line inside the house year-round, and I managed to find the one man in a 3-state radius whose family would make me feel like I have expectations of Paris Hilton proportions.

Sometimes when he’s out snowboarding, skateboarding, or away racing—I pretend that he’s out hunting and gathering; some of these days I’m moved to put on some

1950's music and pretend I have a fancy cocktail hour with appetizers to put together for "my husband's clients" before he gets home. This always ends in my having too much cheap vodka and ruining my dinner on chips and dip before I even start the water heating for that night's spaghetti.

I suspect that the only way he's able to hang onto the last vestige of his rebel punk identity is to make sure he's on the ragged edge of Broke, or his 23-year-old self will be disappointed that he'd succumbed to the dirty world of personal responsibility and affording real happy hours...and home furnishings.

There once was a reality show called, "I Want to Date a Race Car Driver". I didn't watch it because I know they wouldn't have shown the reality. My reality:

- My husband as a 3-year-old, driving his matchbox cars around and around and around his mother's oval rag rug until he wore a hole in it.
- My husband pulling his 1980 Ford Econoline Van into the paddock to be assigned a spot in a sea of million-dollar campers after having driven cross-country with his personally and exquisitely-built pro race car strapped to an old flatbed trailer, shiny and spectacular once the tarp was proudly lifted and the road bugs washed off its surface.
- My husband cooking beans and ramen over a semi-functional camping stove while neighboring teams sat at their table-clothed "reception areas", lunch provided by the caterer.
- My husband--walking the track to feel its curves with the soles of his feet and plot his angles and project his speeds in the eerie stillness of a professional racetrack at dusk, while his competitors booze and hit their hotel's pool.
- The way he comes alive amidst the wafts of racing fuel, squealing of tires and engines, and the god-forsaken heat rising off of an endless swatch of pavement
- Being showered by his goofy grins, his white teeth never appearing as brilliant as when he smiles through a layer of car exhaust and grime that had settled into his pores.
- Seeing the man I fell in love with appear again suddenly, as though the spirit of Passion Itself has suddenly taken up residence in the body of my husband,

emanating with the rare and humbling glow of someone who has found...maybe known all along...what it is that they are meant to be doing.

So while I would argue that my husband is missing his responsible, self-sufficient-grown-up bits, the other half of me—the half that sits trapped behind someone else's reception desk, can't help but argue for going for it. Whatever your 'it' may be. The mountains aren't just made up of rock and dirt. They have been built from communities of dream-chasers since the first whisper of there being gold in "them thar hills". "Going after a dream has a price", writes Paulo Coelho. "It may mean abandoning our habits, it may make us go through hardships, or it may lead us to disappointment. But however costly it may be, it is never as high as the price paid by people who didn't live".