

# The Duct Tapes

## Cyclescam

● ALL I WANTED WAS A HANDFUL OF PLASTIC tie straps to cinch around my spoke cross-over points, but when I found out how much they were selling for I dug my way past the bottom layer of bent screwdrivers and bulbless circuit testers in my toolbox and found the roll of wire I used for the purpose before we ran up the petrochemical one-way street. Since my "dagnal" pliers were suffering from severe underbite—after nibbling a bed spring from my countershaft sprocket last week—I went back inside the dealership to borrow something healthier. Steve, the owner, wasn't too anxious to lend me a pair of cutters; he still harbors some resentment over the Triumph I traded in with the magneto rotor welded to the crank nose. I had to trade it in because the keyway was expanding a good sixteenth of an inch every 200 miles and I was wearing out my grinder wheel fabricating keys for the thing.

I was pruning the wire into three-quarter-inch lengths when one of those long automobiles they make for insecure people pulled up. The driver, a short fellow, entered talking through an expensive smile, and the only thing he had to offer Steve was the complete elimination of his bank account—and wealth beyond his wildest dreams of avarice.

Steve started breathing heavily, and I listened with my good ear because I think wealth *can* buy happiness and would like to have some leaned in my direction.

The short man's proposition was a new concept in motorcycle retailing but an old fixture in American-style merchandising. Just as the razor blade manufacturers practically give you the handle so they can beat you to death with the price of blades, and the instant-film folks force a camera on you every time you go to the bank so they can drain your blood at cookouts and graduations, the Fitznone Enduro would sell cheap and repair dear: titanium frame, aluminum swing arm, seven speed with 11 inches of travel at each end "from the factory" and a retail price of \$299.99.

"I'll sell dozens of them," Steve said. "What's my cost?"

"Your cost is \$620 a unit."

"It's been nice talking to you," Steve said with a smile.

"We're mounting a national advertising campaign with a 44-page color insert in every motorcycle magazine. We even have a special edition for a local magazine in Dalton, Georgia, with pictures only."

"It's been nice talking to you."

"We're prepared to asphalt your mud driveway and rewire this place so the lights don't go dim when you use your Mickey Mouse welder."

"Well, alllll riiiiight. Say, what's the displacement of the Fitznone?"

"Two-fifty-five."

"Why that's too big for mediumweight class and too small for heavyweight," Steve said.

"That's right, Steve, and that brings us to our major selling point: The Cyclescam Accessory Line. We supply a 248cc cylinder and piston to make the machine legal and competitive."

"What's the kit cost me?"

"The Cyclescam 248 kit is two bills each in lots of 10."

"What's suggested markup?"

"Suggested markup is 'go for it.'"

"Tell me more."

"Remember I said the bike had 11 inches of suspension *from the factory*? Well, they normally sack out four inches by the time they get to the dealer."

"Don't the riders complain?"

"Yes, but you'll offer a Cyclescam adjustment to raise the bike three inches for a mere \$10."

"A fork kit for \$10?"

"Not exactly, Steve. The seat mounts are slotted; we raise the seat."

"Suppose he still complains?"

"Then we sell him a Cyclescam Fork Kit for \$316."

"Can he buy the kit cheaper elsewhere?"

"Steve, you've just touched the heart of the Cyclescam Concept: our forks are oval section."

"Are the rear shocks as bad?"

"No, they're worse. But we have Cyclescam replacements color-coded for rider weights from 140 to 220 pounds."

"How many colors?"

"Eighty—in one-pound increments."

"You mean?"

"Yep, if a rider drinks a quart of Gatorade and has a fried egg sandwich at the gas stop, he overloads the springs and they coil-bind before the next check. We call it 'rider abuse.'"

"Then he has to carry extra springs."

"Yes, extra Cyclescam springs. A 160-pound rider would switch to orange springs if he drinks a quart and a half of Gatorade. If he ate a fried egg sandwich he'd switch to chartreuse springs."

"Suppose his girl ditched the van making a U-turn after she got lost, and the guy

had nothing to drink and sweated off two pounds?"

"Then he'd switch to beige springs."

"I don't have room to stock 80 sets of springs," Steve said.

"You could do what most dealers do."

"What's that?"

"They get one set of springs and 79 cans of paint."

"Are they adjustable damping units?"

"You bet. If they want some damping all they have to do is put in some of our trick Cyclescam double-base shock oil."

"You mean they come without oil in them?"

"Sure. We want our customers to go through the process of setting up their shocks so they can dial 'em in just the way they want them. Plus they use a heckava lot of expensive oil in the process."

By this time I'd finished pruning the roll of spoke wire and began looking at the Fitznone literature; the tires looked unusual and I asked about them.

"That's because the knobs are undercut on the stock tires. They're designed to retain mud. The Cyclescam replacement tires are normal and priced out of this world."

"Won't the riders buy tires from J.C. Whitney like they do now?" Steve asked.

"No way, Steve. No one stocks a 22-inch front and a 17-and-a-half-inch rear with square valve stems."

The man pulled out his order pad and said, "We'll start you off with five Fitznones and five starter pedal kits."

"Don't they come with starter pedals?" Steve asked.

"No, that's a Cyclescam accessory. Do you want the Cyclescam #1 or the Cyclescam #2 starter pedals?"

"What's the difference?"

"The Cyclescam #2 pedal folds."

"Give me one #1 and four #2s, and can you get me a sign about eight by 16 feet; I want to roof my carport."

"Steve, you have the makings of a real Cyclescam dealer."

"You ain't seen nothing yet; wait'll I get that mud driveway surfaced and run the 220 line in."

"Steve, I'm going to let you in on the best thing of all. Just as soon as we sell 10,000 units we'll make them obsolete with our new monofork qualifier."

"Why do they call it 'qualifier'?"

"Because, Steve baby, it's qualified to increase your profits. What else would it qualify for?"

—Ed Hertfelder

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