

RUSTY LUCAS  
P.O. Box 422  
SANDUSKY, OHIO 44871

July 23, 2004

Francis Hood  
1906 SW Bowman Court  
Topeka, KS 66604

Dear Frankie:

How have you been?!? I have been trying to track you down for a number of years through telephone directory assistance and some of the Internet people finder services. I am sorry that I lost contact with you and I hope that you didn't think I had completely forgotten about you or that I was stubbornly holding a grudge. I am willing to move on if you are.

How is it that you came to live in Kansas of all places? Did Barbara have anything to do with you moving there? Did she maybe have family or other connections there? I always did like her (of course you knew that and I apologize for any misunderstandings). I just always figured you to be a guy that would settle on the east or west coast near the ocean rather than in America's Heartland/Tornado alley. But maybe you are living out my own dream of being a storm chaser.

Do you still make trips to the ocean in the summer time at least? I was just there last week for a few days in Ocean City, MD and I was thinking about the trip we took to Florida the summer just before our senior year in high school. You remember those wild and crazy days! Wasn't it just after that trip that you first met Barbara and turned into a straight laced goody two shoes? I don't mean any disrespect by saying that. I never told this to you before, but I really respected you for that. I just didn't want any of the other guys to think I was no longer cool.

My trip to Ocean City brought back so many memories (there was this one crab of a lady that I wanted to shove down the stairs and fill her gas tank up with sugar, but I kept my cool) that I renewed my attempts to find your address and now here we are! I couldn't believe that I did finally get a current mailing address!

You remember Nanny? Well she died about seven years ago, but she lived a long wonderful life. Anyway, I was thinking about her when I found a penny on the sidewalk because you know how she always had jars of pennies around... So now every time I find a penny I imagine that it came from her. Sort of like Pennies from Heaven... So when I found that penny in Ocean City, I had a short conversation with Nanny and as I was thinking about you and the Florida trip, I asked Nanny if she could help me to find you again and that maybe we could repair any rift in our friendship.

Frankie, I truly believe that she pulled a few strings to get us to regain contact and I am not going to pass up this opportunity or I would not be able to live with myself.

Anyway, let me fill you in on me and my life. I still haven't gotten married, but I do have a steady girl these days who is really swell. You would like her and so would Barbara. I know that we had a bit of a rocky time what with that one stupid drunken night, but I hope that you and Barbara can come out sometime to meet Winnie. (Just don't ever call her Pooh, she gets really sensitive and bent out of shape about that).

I know that it seems hard to believe, but the old "Rust-Bucket" is settling down and losing his wild ways now too. I think it just took a good woman to bring that about. I ended up in Sandusky, Ohio. Do you remember how we always talked about going to Cedar Point, but we never made it? Dude!! I live just a few miles away from there now! I know it is not the ocean, but the lake is almost as nice and I think I might stay here and settle down. Winnie is a Sandusky native with a heart of gold. Remember that old Neil Young song we used to sing at karioke bars? Well, I kept searching for that heart of gold, and I may have finally found it.

Anyway, I told Winnie all about both of you and I told her about that night and I told her about how our lifelong friendship to that point went sour because of a few bad decisions. I was stupid and I hope you can forgive me. We had such a good thing going together for so long and I think we have spent enough time being angry at each other. I am willing to admit that I was wrong and ask for your forgiveness.

You know, if I ever have children of my own and tell them stories about our escapades, I would like them to MEET the guy that tossed an M-80 into the old alloy plant rather than me just tell them stories about him. I'd like them to meet my partner in crime who tied the new kid to the cross in the cemetery and left him there for the night. I'd like them to meet the guy who used to talk really quiet/silent to the old nuns in high school just to get them to turn up their hearing aids and then shout really loud to them and scare the heck out of them. We really had them going with that prank! I'd like them to meet the guy that put five .38 rounds and one .357 into the revolver without telling the other guy about the one .357 cartridge in there and letting him find it for himself.

Dude, let's bury the hatchet and let bygones be bygones and just be friends again. Please write back.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rusty". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Rusty

p.s. I still have trouble believing that you settled in Kansas. That is astounding to me. I wonder if you could send me a baseball cap depicting Topeka, Kansas or some landmark/tourist attraction there. It could even just have the town name embroidered on the front or something like that, I don't care. I am sorry to say that I am slowly losing my hair and I tend to wear baseball caps a lot these days to avoid frontal lobe sunburns. I'd love to have a cap from your neck of the woods! I can send you back a Cedar Point cap if you like.