

# Willie Flocko's.... COUNTRY KITCHEN

From April/May 1999

## Willie Flocko's Country Kitchen: Zeke's (Killer) Beloved Hush Puppies

My cousin, Zeke, is about two years older than I am. I only saw Zeke on infrequent visits from San Francisco, when we traveled back to the old Flocko homestead in French Lick, Mississippi, where he grew up.

I used to embarrass Zeke a lot. When I was eight, I embarrassed Zeke because I wore shoes and because I couldn't climb a tree. At 14, I embarrassed him because I was still a virgin...

"You mean you ain't racked no goodies?" said Zeke.

"Huh?" I said.

"You ain't popped a zobie?" asked Zeke.

"Whaaa?" This was all Greek to me. Zeke was kind enough to give me the benefit of his advanced age and experience and he explained the whole wonderful truth.

When I was barely 21 and Zeke was 23, we had a chance to meet in Atlanta. I was there for a national conference of my college fraternity. Just out of graduate school, Zeke was there on business, working as a chemical engineer. We bellied up to the bar at the Atlanta Marriott in the middle of the afternoon, and caught up on old times.

We drank Chivas Regal. "Real guys only drink Chivas," proclaimed Zeke. After several drinks, Zeke began to yell at the other bar patrons, all members of chapters of my college fraternity.

"Hey, I'm Zeke, and I'm a Teke!"...This was a common name for Zeke's own college fraternity and not the one represented at the bar. I thought that it would be a good time to leave. We staggered out into the Atlanta sun, and Zeke proposed we stagger up the street to visit our Uncle Homer, who was an executive in a large national telephone company. So up to Uncle Homer's office we crawled. At Homer's outer office, Zeke tried to proposition every female secretary, clerk and office worker he could potentially get his hands on. He minced no words—in very graphic and certain terms, he offered two options: intercourse or, as we might say in this day and age, a monica. Just as the women were preparing to leap from a window or open fire, Uncle Homer emerged from his office and got us out of there.

After that episode, I only had the opportunity to see Zeke every few years or so at family reunions. I usually dreaded and occasionally avoided them; Zeke's inebriated craziness was pretty intense, and got worse as the years rolled by.

But then, last summer, I went to yet another family gathering. Sitting in my motel room near French Lick, I was a basket case. How would I handle an afternoon and evening of Zeke? How and who would he humiliate this time? I sucked up my courage and drove into the ancestral homestead and there was Zeke running up to my car.

But there was something different...the maniacal gleam in Zeke's eye was the same, but the eye wasn't bloodshot! Zeke was raving...but not slurring his words! He was running amok...but not staggering!

What the???

Jesus. Zeke informed me that he had quit drinking and discovered Jesus. He spent the rest of the afternoon and evening regaling me with stories of his lay ministry at the saloons of Gulfport and Biloxi...his music ministry in the jails of Mobile...his "witnessing" at the whorehouses of Pascagoula!

His new wife's collection of "Precious Moments" figurines!

It was a new Zeke, though just as hyper, just as manic, but a new Zeke. When I returned to my motel I felt compelled to write our common cousin, Tommy, who hadn't seen Zeke in 10 years or so.

"Tommy," I wrote. "I had some good news and some bad news. The good news is that Zeke has quit drinking and found Jesus! The bad news is...that Zeke has quit drinking and found Jesus!"

Both the "old Zeke" and the "new Zeke" were/are wonderful cooks. Over the years, I had, many times, enjoyed his famous, "Killer Hush Puppies." He finally gave me the recipe this past visit. I am sharing that recipe with you, though, out of deference to the "new Zeke," I have renamed them, "Zeke's Beloved Hush Puppies." ENJOY

### ZEKE'S BELOVED HUSH PUPPIES

#### Dry ingredients:

1 cup cornmeal (white, stone ground if possible)

1 cup flour

1 ½ tsp seasoned pepper

1 tsp Chacheres cajun seasoning ( or other all-purpose cajun seasoning mix)

4 tsp sugar

4 tsp baking powder

#### Wet Ingredients:

4 eggs, beaten

1 cup buttermilk

1 onion, chopped

2 cups shrimp, chopped, and/or 1 cup crab meat

Mix together. Add additional cornmeal if necessary for consistency. Spoon into hot peanut oil in a deep fryer or electric skillet. Cook until golden brown or darker if desired. These are extremely rich, so only a few each in enough—however, one may consume more if they are washed down by a sufficient amount of Chivas!

Our friend Bill Bengé died in 2006...



# THE ZEPHYR BACKBONE

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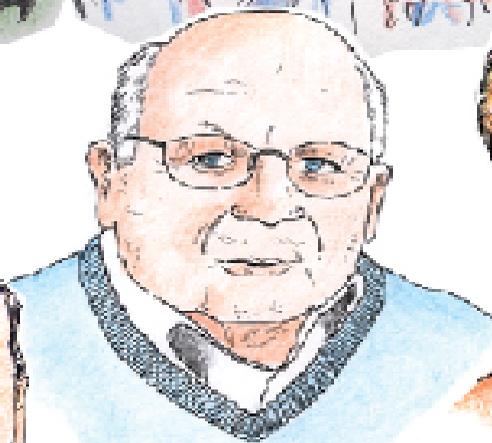
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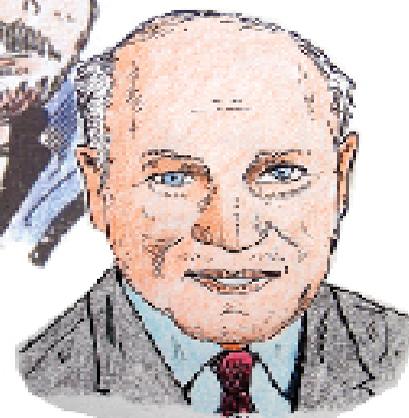
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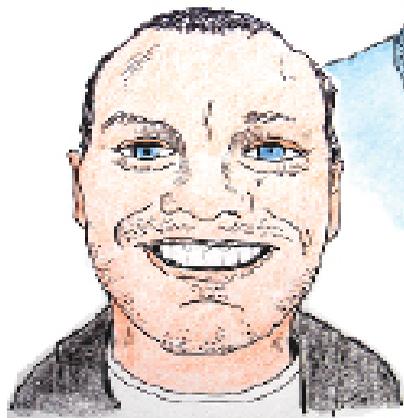
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