

HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU, KID...

Born June 21, 1934 and raised on a farm near Harvey's Lake, PA... at age three, wandering off and concealing himself in a hayfield, the already adventurous boy was the subject of an unusual accident: the child's feet were essentially amputated at the ankles by a horse-drawn, sickle-bar haymower. A miracle of surgery—performed in the Wyoming Valley by the coal industry's top orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Harry A. Smith—rejoined the feet to the boy's lower limbs. Everything medically possible had been done; but, in those days, the emotional impact on the child was of little concern.

A loner in steel braces until the age of eight, Richard Ide began writing stories in grade school. (Not until leaving Atlantic City, at the age of 49, would he seriously attempt a first novel.)

Graduating from Wyoming Seminary, Kingston, PA in 1952, he entered Penn State University at State College, PA to study aeronautical engineering. As a "social pledge" at Delta Tau Delta—a fraternity known then for its raucous parties—Ide sank into hard-drinking, leaving Penn State in disgrace at the end of his freshman year.

Trying to amend his behavior, Ide backtracked to Mercersburg Academy for a postgraduate year, writing several notable short stories for the school literary magazine and producing an audio tape that elected a friend class President. He won a trophy as best debater for the winning Irving Literary team at the annual Inter-Society debate. Ide's grades soared, and he was accepted for the fall of 1954 as a Freshman at Williams College, Williamstown, Mass.

Coasting through freshman studies at Williams, and unprepared for a more difficult Sophomore year, Ide plunged into extra-curricular activities. He resurrected and published "The Purple Cow," the school's humor magazine—one copy landing on the desk of then U.S. President, Dwight D. Eisenhower, who reportedly failed to "see any humor" in it. Ide also took part in productions at the school's Adams Memorial Theatre, advancing to better roles that summer on Cape Cod with a Williams troupe that performed at the Highfield Theatre on the old Beebe Estate.

By the fall of 1956, ignoring a proposed scholarship to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in England, Richard Ide had left Williams, enrolling instead at the Stella Adler Theater Studio in New York City. (Ide credits Stella Adler for developing within him a fierce interest in character analysis—witness the intricate character portrayals in his later trucking novel, 3ACES.) Within 6 months (after some singing lessons), Ide landed a leading roll in a Phoenix Theatre musical comedy: "Livin' The Life," playing Huckleberry Finn. The show closed after a six-week run. "An American Girl" followed—the male lead, in this film shot for TV, the high spot of his acting career. For the next two years he barely scratched out a living, taking extra parts in Hollywood and Signal Corps films shooting in and around the city. Finally accepting help from a college friend, Ide went to work in 1960 for Hornblower & Weeks, an old-line broker at 40 Wall Street.

Knocking on the doors of businessmen all over Manhattan and Brooklyn, Richard Ide proved adept at landing new accounts. Promoted uptown to Hornblower's new 320 Park Avenue office, a personal crisis arose. His father's contracting business was showing signs of slipping out of family hands. Mistakenly, he returned to Pennsylvania to take an active interest in the business.

Married now, Ide found himself embattled at home, as well as ineffective in the business. After fifteen years of treading water, he sold his interest in the contracting company, experienced a divorce, and struck out for Atlantic City.

It was 1979, and gambling had been legalized on Absecon Island. Excited by the notion that New Jersey's Casino Control Commission had sanctified gambling, Ide enrolled in an Atlantic Avenue dealers' school. A bureaucratic struggle ensued in landing his Craps dealing job; in two years, he'd taken enough punishment... to pen a searing first book. After five years of hard writing back

in Pennsylvania, where he was closer to his two children, he convinced Anita Diamant in New York to agent the novel. Six major publishers rejected the manuscript as “...too long.”

Feeling there had to be a great story waiting out there on America’s highway system, Ide decided to use his now-sharpened literary skills to novelize the life of the long haul trucker...

Our adventurer was “On the road again”...this time at a trucking school, accepting the offer of a long haul driving job with a carrier out of Carlisle, PA. Drivers seemed to switch firms at the drop of a hat, but Ide stuck it out with his original employer to study the ups and downs of a single business. Nine years and nearly a million long haul miles later, Ide left the firm—only after suffering a heart attack.

The real magic in his life began when Ide found he had no permanent damage from his illness. Back in the Endless Mountains of Northeastern PA, he let the trucking story flow from memory to the page. He was deep into researching the character of Abner Weaver (the solitary Vietnam Veteran driver of 3ACES) when Ide realized he was trying to analyze *himself*—that unsettled, checkerboard life of his...now strangely relating to the PTSD, the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, he’d planted in Weaver—similar patterns of depression, self-destructive drinking, night terrors and flashbacks...which seemed to link back to that near-fatal morning in the hayfield.

New York once again rebuffed his literary efforts: 46 agents refusing to accept DAWN & ABNER, the “trucking” manuscript. Eleven years after leaving the road, Ide retitled the book to 3ACES, had a cover professionally designed, and on May 26, 2008 published it himself.

In Richard Ide’s own words: “I’ve never been happier with *anything* I’ve done. Seven years of writing, then my struggle to get this book between two covers...no matter that it’s consumed ten years. Giving birth to 3ACES has been a true labor of love—it’s my baby!”