Ticket to Ride

HIVer gets POS plate

March 1, 1999 By Gabi Horn

Last December, two and a half years after Kevin Dimmick sued the California Department of Motor Vehicles for denying him an HIV POS *license plate on the grounds that it was offensive, a federal judge ruled that he could hang his serostatus on the back of his Harley. But Dimmick, 42, isn't letting the case ride. After winning his original discrimination suit—which ruled that since Cali has allowed* CANCER *and END HIV plates, denying HIV POS is discriminatory—and getting his plates, Dimmick filed suit again, charging California's attorney general with conspiring with the DMV to obstruct justice. POZ asked Dimmick what keeps him revving.*

Did you think "HIV POS" would cause a problem?

No. I thought it would take a letter and a couple of calls. Believe me, I had other fish to fry. But when the DMV said, "Screw you," and likened "HIV POS" to a racial slur, I said, "Eat this!" and threw a discrimination case at them. There's a "GWMHIVP" plate, which seems to be OK. But the one that really makes me mad is "NEG HIV."

Why did you fight so hard to get the plates?

I'm obsessed. I've gone through three relationships in the course of this lawsuit. Put that in the article: I'm looking for a good woman with HIV who doesn't drink or do drugs. Anyway, my original motivation was being a heterosexual with HIV. It's tough to meet people, tough to date. How can people come out if it's not OK to have HIV?

Why not just ride away with the plates?

I have a moral obligation to follow this through. The attorney general conspired with the DMV to jeopardize my civil rights. I don't know where they got the idea that I'd go away. I guess 'cause most people do.

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