

I tried the translation options on the Cuban video and even the subtitles in Spanish were woefully inaccurate. Here is my own interpretation of the three speakers in the video:

David Blanco: I believe since I was a kid I got into rock and roll due to my father's influence and I loved these films, was attracted to these film characters, these guys getting on their Harleys and taking off as a group. I think because that was my inclination as a child and then growing up I always had that visualization so when the opportunity came that I found a Harley for sale, it quickly became a way of life.

Jose Salgado (mechanic): This bike is maybe 70% original parts. Parts are hard to find and expensive if you can find them so we make our own parts by hand with basic tools: files and a hammer, etc. and we slowly work on a restoration. A lot of parts are invented and made to work. The main thing is that it functions.

Francesco Frontino (Italian living in Cuba): I always liked being on two wheels and expect to ride well into the future. I had bikes, big and small, all my life. When I fell in love in Cuba I began searching for a bike here and after finding a Harley, began extensive repairs. This is a 1948 Harley originally owned by Batista's police years before the Revolution.

Jose Salgado: During the Special Period, I noticed that the rim from a Soviet-built Katiuska was the same size as this rim and I was able to make it work.

Francesco Frantino: I'll tell you, my woman is perhaps more fanatical about Harleys than me. If she gets picked up from school in a car, it annoys her. So its been eight years she's been riding on the Harley and its not often we go for long rides of a few days but on the weekends we try to get out.

David Blanco: In Cuba, it has nothing to do with imitating an American style. We are Cubans and these bikes are a part of our culture, our history and its a beautiful thing to maintain them, restore them. The best place for riders to gather is the highway, go for a ride with no particular place in mind, just to get out and enjoy the countryside. We live in a beautiful country with a great climate. In Canada, you can only ride a few months of the year, here you ride year-round.

There you have it. This years Harley gathering is the second week in February in Varadero, Cuba.

Rob Henry