

FREESTYLIN'

Hello,

Flash back to the BMX racing scene of the early 1980s. Kids who'd grown up on BMX tracks found themselves looking for ways to apply their bike skills and chase the rush of dirt jumping. Add some inspiration from skateboarding into the mix, and a fresh phenomenon was primed and ready to explode. Freestyle was the early name for this form of bicycle manipulation.

In your hands is the *Freestylin'* magazine retrospective, a slab of memories and reflections from a lost era. Launched in June of 1984, *Freestylin'* was there to tell the story and document the creativity coming from the first generation of riders whose actions defined a new sport. It was a time of freedom, and for five brief years, the monthly pages of *Freestylin'* gave voice to that spirit. Those days shaped who we were, and who we became.

It was a huge honor to reconnect with our past and put out one more issue of a magazine that meant a lot to those who were there.

Thanks to Nike for sponsoring this initiative and helping share a bit of history.

— Mark Lewman, Andy Jenkins, Spike Jonze



GENERATION F



FREESTYLIN' \

GENERATION F ; 1984 - 1989



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ON THE COVER : 15-year-old Mathew Hoffman braces himself for a lifetime of risks, injuries, fame, and satisfaction. Photo Windy.

TITLE PAGE : Cement pioneer and pro racer Tinker Juarez flies a flat one over lensman James Cassimus. January, 1980, Lakewood Skateboard World, Lakewood, California.

CONTENTS PAGE : Staples (left to right); the curb endo, the show, and the solitary gliding. RL, Mike Buff, and Miguel Valera.

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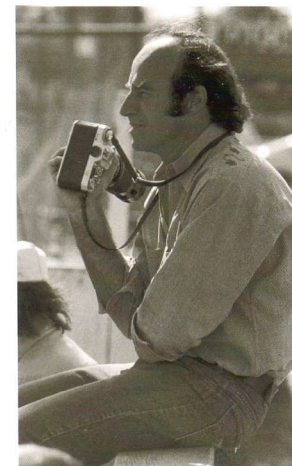
(left) Wizard time warp montage.
(above) Somewhere over the rainbow:
RL, Windy, and Bob.



BOB OSBORN



POP 0000111



3162 KASHIWA \

Bob Osborn was a fireman in the South Bay area of Los Angeles during the 1970s. BMX was on fire all around him. Local races were often disorganized, dirty, and totally exciting. Bob pitched in to help with some of those early events because his son, RL, was into racing. BMX quickly became an obsession for the Osborns, and Bob began publishing a newsletter. He handed a camera to his teenage daughter, Winding, giving her some pointers about shooting racers. The publication was DIY to the bone, and BMX was the glue that held the Osborn family together.

Their newsletter turned into *Bicycle Motocross Action* magazine, the first slick publication devoted to the sport. It had heart, it had soul, it was the bible of BMX. Osborn was the editor, chief photographer, and patriarchal publisher — or as he liked to say, the head honcho. At some point he had to make a choice between putting out blazes and putting out a bike magazine. One of his famous observations about it all went something like, “If I had any idea what I was doing or what the failure rate was on magazines, I would never have gotten into the publishing business.”

The other famous Oz quote was, "Never do anything for money — do it because you love to do it."

And around him, a movement of kids was creating a sport. It was about passion, individuality, creativity, and risk. Wizard Publications produced the vessel in which the stories, images, and folklore of a sport were given the platform to shine. *Bicycle Motocross Action* blurred the line between being incredibly personal and inspiring, and yet, also classic. It was the all important documentation. For those stoked on BMX, it was *National Geographic*. Another Oz insight: the sport needed icons, and elevating these heroes was key to making BMX a legit sport. The magazine ignited the desires and imaginations of readers all over the world.

The real driving force behind the magazine was the amazing photography. Oz had a knack for capturing action and making it look larger than life. Every month, "Hot Shots" of people getting rad off jumps were the frosting on the proverbial cake. In a couple of short years, the publication was thriving. But right under the surface, a tsunami was coming.

Since the dawn of time, kids had done wheelies and used their bikes as a tool to show off. Wizard staff artist Bob Haro took it a step further with trick riding. Rock walks, endos, frame stands, nose wheelies...a whole bunch of groundbreaking stuff was being invented in the parking lot of the magazine headquarters. And after acquiring a wall full of racing trophies, RL was looking for a new rush. He and Haro pushed each other to learn new moves. These were documented, improved on, showcased. There was something flashy and different about this new "thing" (nobody dared call it a sport yet). Guys were rolling into skateparks, building incredibly shady quarterpipes, growing aroos, and letting the freedom fly. It was all the fun stuff about BMX (jumping, air, style, individuality) without the need for a track, or a group of people to race against. You could do it right in the street.

BMX Action magazine (the name had changed to keep up with the times) was also great at informing the culture of BMX. The audience lived, breathed, and dreamed bicycles. It was a lifestyle. Tapping this culture, Oz ran a drawing contest in *BMXA* to explore the artistic talents of the readers. A guy out in the middle of Nowhere, Wyoming, named Andy Jenkins sent in a drawing. His art won. After receiving his prize (Race Inc. cruiser), Andy jotted down a quick thank-you. He was blown away that his drawing had been published.

Oz got the note, dug it out, and picked up the phone. Always one to go with his gut, Osborn offered Jenkins a job as editor of a new publication *Wizard* was planning called *Freestyle*. Trick riding was on the come-up. Andy traded in the constant wind of the high plains for the California sunshine. He was not a trained journalist or editor, but he had a sharp eye for detail, and humor. The first issue of *Freestyle* debuted in June, 1984 and featured a huge exposé on the booming freestyle scene in San Francisco. There was a poster, and a perm-headed 19-year-old named Ron Wilkerson hammering it up on the cover.

The fuse was officially lit. Things began moving quickly; the magazine and the sport followed the template set by BMX, but they also needed to find their own path. It was a time of experimentation, breaking the mold. Hence the magazine's title, sans the "g"... it gave it a loose twist that seemed to imply, "Hey man, just go with it." The aesthetic had new wave undertones; paint splashes, checkerboards and polka dots. And the industry followed the trend too. Chrome-plated bikes gave way to purples, pinks, and toxic greens.



WINDY

WINDY

JENKINS

I'd grown up in Kalamazoo, Michigan, racing bikes. *BMX Action* was a lifeline. But the local scene was dwindling in southwest Michigan, and I'd been filling the void with other pursuits...dabbling in skateboarding, hardcore music, beehive smashing, and attempting to learn rollbacks. *Freestylin'* seemed to tap that West Coast undercurrent that was missing in my life. By June of 1985, Wizard had put out four issues of *Freestylin'* and I was totally hooked. I felt like I knew Andy. I was the last kid in school with a 20-inch bike (white GT Performer, lime green Tuffs). I was ridiculed, mocked, and lost. I'd just graduated and all I had going was my paper route, and riding the bike. What was I going to do with my life?

Upon graduation, my mom bought me stationery to write thank-you notes to my relatives. Instead, I wrote letters to Andy at *Freestylin'*. I'd never written anyone before. My rambling dispatches were fired off every day for a few weeks, until I ran out of stamps. A month later, in the mailbox was an envelope containing a letter and stickers. A reply from Jenkins.

Andy had taken a shine to my freakish persistence and the punk-rock-meets-the-theme-from-*Rocky* mix tapes I'd mailed. Oh, and *Freestylin'* was going bi-monthly and they needed a new editorial assistant. Would I be interested? I moved to Los Angeles in a blink — 17 years old, lugging my stuff in a cardboard box. I'd found my calling.

My first hour as a Wizard employee, I walked into a screening of a freestyle film called *Bicycle Dancin'*. The title sounds terrible, but it was actually shot on 35mm film and looked awesome. In the small, darkened conference room I was sitting elbow-to-elbow with Andy, Windy, Oz, RL, and Eddie Fiola... I was losing it. Nervous and overjoyed. How did this happen to me? Andy and I bonded over our nonstop workload, ever on the search for curbs to skate and indie music to hear. We went to catch Black Flag and I got nailed in the eye with a boat shoe that was being whipped around the mosh pit. The first photo of me in *Freestylin'*, "meet the new guy," I had a black eye.

And so it went.

Oz had found a new path. Wielding his Linhof Technika 4X5 field camera, he'd disappear for weeks at a time in the wilderness to shoot natural phenomena like sand dunes, plants, rocks, clouds. He went from snapping split-second action and capturing history, to deeply studying some of the most subtle elements in life. I didn't get it. "Why would he want to leave this?" I thought, looking around at the rack full of leftover mid-level CW, GT, and Hutch test bikes parked in the warehouse. After a photo safari, Oz would hole up in his darkroom for days on end. If you put your ear to the door you'd hear classical music, running water...whistling. He was content. There were plans in place for a new magazine, *California Scenic*. Topic: the zen of Southwest nature photography.

Meanwhile, freestyle was going off. There were crazy new products and mailorder depots selling the crazy. There were events dotting the country. New riders to cover, new maneuvers to know. Crazy Carl on line one. Brian Scura on line two. Our editorial mission was very clear: live it. What Andy and I lacked in journalism chops, we made up for in authenticity. At first I was badly fanning out on whatever pro riders I encountered, but nudged my excitement into confidence when I realized my peers and readers were dudes just like me. Windy helped a ton there...she'd grown up in the industry, and, truth be told, all their riders wanted to do was get their picture in the mag. I was just the guy writing the captions, but she was capturing the mayhem on film. She ran the photo shoots and was driven to be as creative as the riding. Her go-to tricks included the fisheye lens, flashes, motordrive sequences and more. The results were usually striking. Often I was sent out to scout colorful, eye-popping wall-mural backdrops for conducting photo shoots of guys doing dainty balancing moves.

Fast forward maybe two years. *Freestylin'* was 150 pages monthly, way too much work for Andy, Windy, and me. There was a kid from Maryland who'd worked at Rockville BMX, the coolest bike shop on the East Coast. Everyone there had a wild nickname. The one we were interested in was named Spike. Even as a senior in high school, he still looked about 13 years old. He had a creative spark and was already entrenched in the freestyle scene as a cult

figure. Spike had contributed a few stories to the magazine by the time we asked him if he wanted a job. Like Jenkins and I, there was no interview process...the life-changing decision was based purely on the hunch that this was the right guy. Spike's college plans vaporized and the day after high school exams, he loaded up his crappy brown car and drove 2,643 miles to Torrance, California, with his friend Nubby riding shotgun.

Spike came on board in the golden years. Club Homeboy, a sort of underground fan club for bike riding, was in effect. *Homeboy* magazine was starting up. We were traveling, making zines, connecting with people in the skateboarding industry, building ramps, playing in bands, dyeing our hair, and riding constantly. I lived with Gork, the headbanging editor of *BMX Action*. We moved into a townhouse just a parking lot away from the industrial park setting of Wizard headquarters. We had a spare room outfitted with a thrift store fold-out couch. Spike moved in. A constant stream of freeloading bike riders and skaters stayed with us. The tan carpet was saturated with WD40 stains and Doritos crumbs. We didn't have a phone, and there were always stinking dishes stacked in the sink.

Spike was supposed to be an editorial assistant/writer. His writing was expressive and his ideas were new, but spelling was not his strong suit. Andy and I were also a lethal mix of occasionally lazy, overworked, and undereducated. Keep in mind, the whole operation was analog back then; we had word processors to type on but would send out the copy to a typesetter. These columns of type and images would be hand-waxed onto boards. Each layout was painstakingly produced, basically a step above the zines we were making at night.

Oz read each issue at the warehouse lunch table, sipping a cup of coffee. A stickler for crisp quality, I think his blood pressure must have risen as a storm of errors and typos crept into the edit. He bought us vest pocket dictionaries and copies of *The Elements of Style*, even offering \$100 bonuses for any issue we managed to get out, on time, with zero errors. Impossible. A professional, sweater-wearing English tutor was summoned to give us lessons in syntax and grammar. We sat smirking like jackasses at the local community college instructor trying to tell us how abubaca was not a real word, and we should find a proper way to describe it. Our point of view on it was, who cared if there was an occasional error or word missing? Just check out that photo of Blyther, dude. Sick. But we got several (ahem) talking-tos about tightening it up and putting out a professional product.

At night it was a different story. The warehouse was ours. We'd pull out launch ramps, a big rail slide bar, throw scooters off the roof, pick the locks on the candy vending machine, Xerox the company cat (sorry, Oz), orchestrate prank phone calls, crank the music, tear down the streets of the empty industrial park on mini-motorcycles. It was *Lord of the Flies*. Gradually this boldness crept into the daylight hours. Our offices were speckled with posters, prints, stickers, and trinkets kids sent us in the mail. We'd gotten into a creative groove and managed to dial in our production shortfalls, mastering the basics of English and bringing experimental writing, photography and art direction into the mix. Spike's iffy spelling had been superceded by his camera skills. Times were good. The days seemed dense with transformative experiences, and each month we'd mark our sport's progress with a new issue of *Freestylin'*.

It seemed like it was over just as quickly as it started. Over the course of five years and 53 issues, a window opened up, some puff of magic smoke had drifted out, and then the window closed again. The bike industry was in a free fall, ad pages dropped off, and *BMX Action* and *Freestylin'* were merged into a single publication, *GO*. Many of our friends and riders could no longer afford to travel or risk it. Spike, Andy, and I looked for ways to bring the energy we'd felt in freestyle to a new audience. The next wave of the BMX industry, this time led by riders, took over and pushed the progress through the dark years. In many ways, the sport is completely different. But some things never change. The greatest challenge in this world is to challenge the world. Find and fight for what you love, and make that your purpose in life. Figure out how to do that, and time stands still.

—Mark Lewman (May 7, 2008)

(left) Staffholes: Andy, Lew, Spike. (spread) Haphazardly customized 1971 Polaris station wagon speeds down Kashiwa hauling a cargo of BMX legends. Bumper to bumper we have: Eddie Fiola, Andy Jenkins, Craig Grasso, Lew (eyes not on the road), Ceppie Maes, RL Osborn, Don Toschach, Winkle, Kevin Hull, Tommy Brackens, McGoo McGruther, Gary Laurent, Gork Barrette, Robert Cardoza.

"NEVER DO ANYTHING FOR
MONEY, DO IT BECAUSE YOU
LOVE TO DO IT."



// BOB HARO

In the beginning, there was Bob. An artist at Wizard Publications with an affinity for creativity and clean lines, Haro was also a sucker for things that moved fast and had flow: surfing, skateboarding, BMX, motorcycles. These elements tumbled together in the Southern California Petri dish, with Haro as the catalyst. Tricks were invented, heads were turned, articles were written, and a fire was started. A new phenomenon was underway.

So, you invented freestyle.

I think it got coined that I was the guy who started it because, one, right place right time, and two, I just stuck with it. John Swanguen, who was my sister's boyfriend, he should have been on the first trick team. But the problem was, he didn't stick to it. He stayed in San Diego. I moved to LA.

You moved to LA to do what?

You know the deal. I'm a 17- or 18-year-old kid just out of high school, and I start sending in my artwork, just cartoons and stuff, to Bob Osborn. And Oz likes it. I meet Bob at a BMX race in Los Angeles, he says, "Hey, why don't you start doing some work for us?" He was doing *BMX Action* magazine out of his house and was still a fireman at the time. I started doing artwork for him and eventually I moved to LA and got a full-time job. I was living with him, and just hanging out and being under the influence of Bob Osborn. You're a young kid, he's got a magazine. Getting your picture in a magazine is a pretty powerful thing at the time.

When did you get coverage for trick riding?

Osborn didn't even know I rode. He just thought I was a kid that rode a little bit and mostly did artwork. I told him, "Hey, Oz, I can do these tricks and things on bikes." And then he finally saw it and that's what came out of the first article on trick riding. The article was a whole new thing. The first one was a rock walk I think, article one. So, I turned RL [Osborn] onto the whole thing. RL's a good rider, so he caught on very quickly. Living with Oz, RL and I were hanging out, and a lot of funny things lined up. Having someone to ride with whose dad owns a magazine, influencing a growing sport.

You suddenly have the power of the media behind you.

Yeah. You know how that works.

How did the bike industry react to it?

In the early days of freestyle, it was merely a sideshow act. It was entertainment between the ABA Grandnationals, or the NBL races.

Wasn't it half-time entertainment at a rodeo?

In the beginning, it was everything from that, on. You do shows at all the kookiest spots. One of the first events was at a Chandler BMX race. After that, we put together our own tours, and I was the first guy to do tours. I was trying to promote Haro Designs, my little company. Basically I thought this would be a good way. We could schedule shows and follow the BMX circuit and go to shops.

That was a pretty smart marketing idea for somebody 20 years old.

Again, it was one of those things that just kinda happened. To be honest with you, we did it for free. I bought a van, I built ramps. My brother Ronnie was just 16. One of the deals for him to go on tour was he had to get his license. So he'd just got his license and got to go on tour with us. We booked three and half months of shows. It was the first time all of us, mostly California kids, had ever been on the East Coast or the Midwest, and we'd never experienced humidity. We blew it by booking our shows in the middle of the afternoon, noon or 1 o'clock. It was just blazing hot. But it was fun. We did a lot of shows, a lot of miles on the road. I look back at some of the stuff we were doing on archival video, and it's really archaic. It looks totally funny. It's almost embarrassing because it doesn't seem like it was that spectacular for the times.

Did you find kids on tour who wanted to start riding freestyle the minute they saw it?

Most of the kids were just BMX guys, their whole thing was racing. They'd have their BMX bikes and prior to the show everybody's out in the parking lot. We had shows where the local dealers didn't do a very good job and there was a handful of people, and we'd traveled a long ways to get there. And we had other shows where a thousand people would show up.

What product lines did you have out at the time to promote?

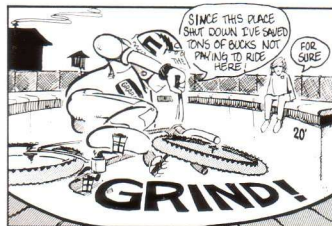
We were doing number plates, numbers, jerseys, as basic a line as you could have. Our big thing was it wasn't about business — you were having fun riding, and the secondary thing was, hey, I can make a little money. We made posters up and a bunch of silly stuff. We'd break out a table and sit there and sell the stuff. It was almost like a swap meet, nothing glamorous.

What ever happened to your partner John Swanguen?

He ended up working for the post office. It's a weird twist of fate, how things go. To be honest with you, he should have been one of the guys that was sharing the huge amount of influence on shaping the sport. He was a better rider than me. He was a natural. The most basic thing, he'd pull it off flawlessly. He stayed in San Diego and never did anything with his ability to ride.

What were your influences as an artist?

Probably skate and surfing, that type of art, style and lifestyle. My interest in art comes from an interest in being a designer. As much as you love bikes, it's good to look elsewhere for new direction and influence. I've always been kind of a freak for magazines. I've never been a great reader of books.



Portrait of the artist as a young man.
(right) Edger at the infamous 6th Street/Com-monwealth banks in downtown Los Angeles.

BOB OSBORN

CASSIMUS





Even when I was a kid, I always had 20 magazine subscriptions a month. From car to home design to ladies fashion magazines.

Did you go to art school?

No, I went to high school, got a job in LA immediately working for Osborn, and kind of got formalized art training by the art director that he had. I was the grunt that had to do all the lame jobs.

How did the Wizard days come to a close?

I was growing up. My opinion was getting stronger, and I was getting more confident in what I was doing. And Oz was very controlling. We had a major falling out at a race, I think in Oklahoma or Texas. Bob Morales and I were doing Haro team shows. RL was doing shows. We were going toe to toe. There was rivalry. We were at a race getting ready to do a demo, and we were arguing over who was going to go first. We were going to move their ramps, or they were going to move our ramps. It was really ugly. I like Bob, and after a while we made up and became friends again. It was a strange time as things were evolving. RL was doing his thing, I was doing my thing. In the early days, I can't say anything bad about Oz because he actually rented me space so I could have my little business there. We were making number plates.

How did you end up in ET?

Things kinda happen. I'd just gotten back from out running errands. There was a note on my desk, "Some movie director called, wanted to know if you want to be in a movie." I called the guy, his name was Jeremy Schwartz. This guy was working with Kathleen Kennedy and Steven Spielberg. So, I called 'em up, and they said they were making a film. I think what happened is they must have been to a local BMX race in Torrance, and this was when I was more popular as a rider, and when the producers asked some kids, my name came up. They gave me a call. I almost didn't take the job, to tell you the truth. For one, I wasn't SAG, I was basically a scalper kid just showing up to ride. They weren't going to pay us very much, 50 dollars a day. I was living in Torrance and driving to Northridge. I was like, "Guys, it's not going to be worth it for 50 dollars a day." After riding they could see that I knew what I was doing and knew how to ride. And I kinda helped set up some of the jumps for them. So, I think I made 350 a day.

How did the other riders get picked up?

I think they fit the body type of the principle actors. They were trying to fit riders to match them.

Didn't you have a 'fro at the time?

I probably did. That had to be concealed, I had to wear that ski cap.

What was the bike industry's reaction, and the reaction from other riders?

The sport was so innocent. I think kids nowadays are more sophisticated, not jaded, but the sport is exposed. Back then, everything was new and exciting. Even though it was dorky, it was still kinda cool.

How did the idea to create a freestyle bike come together?

I had a sponsorship with Torker bicycles, and my bike wasn't a stock Torker. The geometry was steeper, the drop-outs were different. Back then we wanted coaster brakes, so I wanted a bracket for that. I liked the double top tube with grip tape for the type of tricks we were doing. My business of making number plates and brake levers and things was naturally evolving. I thought it should evolve to where I had my own frame. I went to Torker and said I want to do my own frameset. I think I even said, "I can do it with you, or do it without you. But I want to do it with you." So they helped me out to do the first one.

How did shops and the retail market take it?

The sport hadn't hit. It was just niche. It wasn't even a sport actually.

When did the production frames come out?

By 1980 it was probably on the market. We sold hundreds — not very many. Then I hired Jim Ford. He had a bigger picture. I was too much of a designer and too much of a rider. Going to trade shows, we met some guy that was repping a factory in Taiwan and was looking to get into the bicycle business. And that basically gave us the horsepower we needed. All of a sudden we had buyer might, and we had the manufacturing capabilities to build proprietary products that we wanted.

What about the talent pool? What riders caught your eye?

I was personally going to BMX events all the time. We were always really good at spotting new talent, like Wilkerson. We were growing, and we were into it. We would try to get 'em on our team. I think the roster we had was really amazing. Dennis McCoy was a find at a shopping center. We did a show in his town, he was one of the kids in the crowd, and he was busting all these tricks. We were like, "Man, this kid's hot." And that grassroots style of being at a shopping center at a town out in the middle of nowhere, all of a sudden you see all this hot talent.

What fundamental tricks did you invent that are still in use today?

I would say the idea of riding ramps and doing vertical tricks. That would be a huge fundamental one. Rolling backwards type tricks, popularizing that. Fundamentals. I used to ride Marina Del Rey skateboard park. They had a spine ramp, and I used to do tricks over that.

What are some of the best places you ever sessioned?

I think it's street riding with friends, riding through towns or whatever with your friends. Being out on tour, bombing through a town with a bunch of kids.

Did you used to get kicked out by security guards when you rode?

Of course. Standard issue.

What about competition? Did you ever compete in an event?

I've never competed. I think competition started to evolve in the tail end of my riding career. I never went there. I kept re-injuring my knee, and that was taking the steam out of me as I continued to ride. And the other thing was that I had a business to run, and that was starting to grow. I was starting to recognize that if I spend more time doing this, I could make more money. Because there wasn't that much money to be made as a BMX rider. I had a sponsorship with Oakley and made 100 dollars a month. And the other harsh reality was that I was about 24 or 25, and there were guys like Mike Dominguez and Mat Hoffman coming on board. Fifteen-year-old kids, who, just warming up, are doing 8- and 9-foot airs. And on your best day you weren't hitting that. "You know what? I think I should be sitting behind the drawing board working on some new product designs [laughter]. It's time to pass the torch." And that's okay, I was totally cool with that. I didn't want people to remember me getting worse and worse, so people could never say that I was crappy. Because the thing people remember is the last time they saw you.

What do you remember about freestyle once you stopped riding? There was some dorky stuff happening in there.

The magazines perpetuated some of that, too, though. Remember the magazine became all scooter crazy, and *Freestylin'* was covering skateboards. I'm not against skateboarding at all. But maybe the focus of what the sport was about got diluted. We were all just kind of wandering, kind of lost. And I think a lot of people came in to cash in on what it was doing. When I sold my business to West Coast Cycles, my first year, we had a great year. We were like the darlings of the company. The following year the freestyle and BMX markets took a header, and I remember the sales guy coming up to me and saying, "Hey, you need to do something quick. You need to invent a new sport." They wanted to make the money they were making before. I was like, "Are you kidding?" The people who stuck it out when the sport went sideways in the 1990s, they kind of purified it.

COURTESY OF BOB HARO



(above) Mobbed by fans. This is what people who have never, ever seen trick riding look like. (right) Crank up the style. Europe? Looks like Europe.



// RL OSBORN

Every freestyle rider owes a debt to RL. For tucking those first curb endos. For jumping through hoops of fire. For rocking an afro and making it look awesome. For having style to die for on dirt, concrete, and plywood. For hooking up so many other riders. For pouring everything into a bike company. For daring to dream about what freestyle could become.

At the magazine we gave him a nickname: El Cid. This is what he had to say about being The Man.

What do you think you'd be if you hadn't gotten into BMX?

Definitely running my own business. I was always really motivated from a young age. In fact, before bicycles I was importing and selling firecrackers from Mexico. I was working in bike shops since I was 12 years old. I always had something going.

Have you ever found anything else in life that compares to the freedom and creativity you found right there at the beginning of freestyle?

No. Nothing compares to that. It gave me all those chances to be a kind of an explorer and it gave me the opportunity to be creative in so many different ways. There were so many great things that came out of it. Everyone needs to have an artistic outlet. It feels good just to be able to do something with no restrictions. All the different things we were exploring and checking out and inventing. The music we came across. And when I say "we," I mean me, you, Andy, everyone. We taught ourselves all sorts of things, and bikes just kind of mixed in. We lived ten lifetimes in one.

You were around for some really interesting parts of freestyle—that whole decade of the 1980s. So much changed in that time. What was your favorite era?

Well, fun-wise, traveling with [Mike] Buff. The original *BMX Action* Trick Team tours were my favorite as far as fun goes. Just the way we all got along. There was no money, we were supporting ourselves, and it was all fresh and pure. You know how money kind of adds a different element, and so without the money, it was pure. That was really cool. It was a real trip for me to start out in the beginning when tricks were kind of rough and very basic, and then also end up in the very technical side of riding with all the rolling tricks.

When freestyle was new, anything was game: You'd throw a trackstand down and people were

WINNY



The BMX Action Trick Team, circa 1985. Ronnie Wilton pops out to trackstand as RL holds steady. This was a jaw-dropping move in its day. (spread) Backwards infinity roll, pro finals, AFA Velodrome comp.



"YOU KNOW, THE MEMORIES
ARE PRICELESS. YOU LEAN ON
THE MEMORIES."

freaking out. Later it became important to deliver next-level riding with tricks that were really pushing the progress.

Yeah. It was more like, "Well, that's new and different" in the beginning, and so it was neat, but then the really sophisticated stuff, the technical stuff like rolling tricks came in. That's when I could stand back when I wasn't even riding and see someone like Kevin Jones—even if it was a trick I could do—and just be like, "Wow, that's mind-boggling. That's heavy." Just to understand what you have to go through to learn a trick—how much balance is involved—and then watch another rider. It was just heavy.

You may be the most photographed rider in Freestyle and BMX Action. Do you have a favorite photo you remember from back in the day?

Jeff Kosmala and I did a photo shoot at a lake where we both hit this ramp at the same time and we were both really high in the air jumping into a lake. I think it's a back shot of us. I think it was a two-page spread. We took off across the parking lot where we had to hit a ramp, and he was like 250 pounds at the time. And you had to clear like 20 feet of rocks before you even got to the water, and then you had to go another 20 feet out in the water so it was deep enough. When we hit the ramp, we were going so fast that the ramp slid four or five feet because he weighed so much. So that was pretty hairy. It slid almost into the rocks, but we got off okay, and the picture came out really neat.

What was gnarliest thing you ever saw someone do on a bike?

Of course, the first thing that comes into my head is Mat Hoffman. I can't think what the trick was... No, you know what? It was Mike Dominguez in the early days doing twelve-foot airs out of eight-foot pools. I think he was wearing contacts at the time and he never took them out so he could hardly see—so it was total feel—and watching him just blast out the top was crazy. And this was when everyone else was going six or seven feet. He was going twice as high as everyone else. Another time, we were at a fair doing a show, and I was with Kevin Jones talking about decades, and I was like, "Let's see a double decade," and he was like, "Alright," and just whips off a triple decade right in front of me. No problem. Just first try.

Mike D had the gift.

Yeah, when you watch other riders when they go really high or try a gnarly trick, they come in and land close to the flatbottom and just slam, but if you watch Michael, when he goes out you hear a tick tick, and when he comes back in you hear a tick tick, and it's the sound of his front and rear tire hitting the coping every time. He's so precise. It was all by feel. It was a beautiful thing to watch if you knew what was going on.

You were his last sponsor. How did you manage running a business, being a pro rider, and managing other riders?

It was really hard to ride and run the company, because your head was so in the business all the time, and then you have to stop that and go out and ride and try to be good. And I think that's when I started fading out of riding pro—when I started getting more into the business. And Michael was trying to come back in, but the sport was slowing down at the same time, and the economy was in the can, and it was that whole thing of the energy not being there—lack of money for the sport. That's why Michael never fully came back. It wasn't worth it for him to risk himself. Without the money, he had no reason to damage himself like that. He definitely had the talent. We paid him well, but it was just hard to keep up with it. The sales were going down and the economy got worse, so it was hard. I really respect the guys that do that. In fact, if you watch the guys closely who are running a business and riding, they don't seem to be as smooth anymore. You don't have as much time to practice, so you have to be on it when you do get out there. It kind of shows. It's really hard to do.

Nowadays, a lot of BMX companies are rider-owned. And you were one of the first guys to go out on a limb and do it.

And I didn't know anything about cycles—that when industries died, they came back. I thought when they died, they died, and that was it. I didn't know it would come back. I didn't know what a bad economy was, you know? People were saying to me, "What are you doing about the economy? Have you put money away?" But I didn't even know what an economy was, I didn't know any of that stuff. I wasn't worried about all that.

It was kind of a weird bubble of insulation. Normal people go to college for four years and get a job and start at the bottom and it takes years to build a career. A lot of freestyle guys kind of skipped past some of that and got right to the sweet stuff, making money and traveling. They got a chance to experience things.

Yeah, but you gave up a lot. You kind of missed some stuff, and so there's a lot of things you don't know. And when the lessons come, they're really painful and expensive.

What was your shining moment, personally?

I always did really good at the Velodrome, the California contests. I won that contest once or twice and that was good to do in front of friends. That was really cool. One year I won the first three contests, and then I lost my ride halfway through the year. But I had the first three and there was only six, so I had number one wrapped up. But it was funny because part-way through—after I'd won those three—I kind of lost interest. Like, it was accomplished. I wasn't really that motivated anymore, but I'd lost my ride at that point, also. That's when General picked me up, and Dennis won the next two contests, and then we tied at the finals. That was a pretty heavy moment. I thought I had it won, all my friends said, "You got it," but then it came up to a tie. I had totally taken my helmet off and I was not ready for a run-off. And by the way, that's not to take anything away from Dennis, 'cause he was a hot rider. He was sharp and fast in that run-off and he smoked me. That was still a really good competition through that whole series...a lot of ups and downs coming into the run-off. It was really cool.

I don't think we were always fair to Bob Morales, because he was maybe 21 or 22 putting on these AFA events, and people would get really mad at him and not consider that he was trying to do something good for the sport and elevate everyone. We'd just be like, "Ah, you hired these dorks to judge? What



BOB MORALES

WENDY



The BMX Trick Team, circa 86. Richie Bush, Ror Wilton, RL, Fred Blood.

are you doing?"

Yeah, I think a lot of people laid into him pretty heavily. I tried not to take it too seriously, though.

What was your biggest reward from riding? What did you spend your money on?

Well, I wasted a lot on cars and things like that, stupid stuff. I was also smart. I invested a lot of it in real estate—but I just got tore up when real estate went downhill. I bought a lot of toys, but I invested a lot, too, but the investments turned bad.

Yeah, I always remember you were the first guy with a really rad truck, and you were the first guy with a couple of condos that you turned into a house.

I was doing everything right, but the market turned bad, and what are you gonna do?

What mementos did you save from that era?

Nothing. I stay in touch with Large Ray. He sent me two Bully frames, out of the blue. That's all I have. I threw 400 trophies away, all of them. I didn't want my kids to look at them and think that they had to compete with that. Looking back, I wish I would've kept them but I didn't want that stress on their shoulders.

How would you like to be remembered for what you accomplished in freestyle?

I want to be remembered as an equal. I had a good relationship with a lot of kids out there because we treated each other as equals...not anything different. I never wanted special treatment because of any riding I'd done or because I'd been in a magazine. I just wanted normal relationships, and that's what I got. That was really great.

That's interesting. At the beginning of BMX and of freestyle, I think your dad was early to recognize that to build something out of the sport it needed heroes, and he always tried to make them. It was like a hero factory—the magazine—and you tried to create the legends and heroes, the aspirational people who kids could look up to. It's cool that you consider yourself part of your fanbase and the people who were making it all possible.

Exactly. Nobody out of this whole thing gets to sit any higher on the bleachers. We're all at the bottom. There were a few people that thought they were higher, but I got along with a lot of people out there because we were just equals, and that was neat.

Early on, everything was happening from a few riders, but as the sport trickled down and magazines and videos got in the hands of these kids, it became a sport where the next big trick or thing could come out of anywhere, you know?

Yeah, I thought it was neat how everything eventually mellowed out and people were willing to develop their own style and learn new stuff. At first, all people wanted to do was go after the few top guys because they figured they'd be the top guys, and then they'd get all the stardom. That's the way they saw it, and it was so ridiculous, because then there's me and a couple other guys who were actually out there building the sport, busting our ass at our own cost, and there're these guys who want to just take us out and stand on the foundation that we just built. That used to just crack me up. I'd be like, "Hey, just be a good rider, there's room for everyone." But there were some guys that figured that was the way to get to the top, just take everyone out.

I guess some of that might have been a little bit of the DNA of BMX, you know? The competitive side of BMX. Was there anything you wished you'd learned as far as tricks go?



WINNY

GIBBSON



(left) The 5-star general of freestyle. Backwards rubber ride down the boulevard.

No. I'm glad that I tried to stick with my own thing, because I always kind of felt like it'd be like stealing their art if I did the tricks of guys who developed their own tricks. I felt like it'd be painting their picture, and that to me just didn't feel right. I always wanted to develop my own thing. It felt more creative to me.

How did you push yourself to progress?

Well, it's not so hard when you have Rodney Mullen as a roommate. Flu, sick, barfing—that guy is up early in the morning, practicing. And I would watch him at the window and that was pretty motivating. All my friends were just so into it. It's kinda like just jumping in the car and everyone's going the same direction. If you're in the car, you're going that way. It wasn't such a bad life. We'd get up at like 2 o'clock in the afternoon and go to Joe's and have dinner, and then we'd ride for the rest of the day.

Who did you have respect for as a rider?

Of course, Kevin Jones. And I also have the ultimate respect for Mike Dominguez. I was so impressed with him and his abilities. Michael and "natural," those two words go together. Mat Hoffman, he's got balls of steel. I give that to him — for what he does and for his talent.

I always thought that you represented something really cool in that you were a pure bike rider. You started out racing, but you were a good dirt rider. You did flatland, you did vert, you did street. Towards the end of the 1980s, there was this pressure to really focus and get good at one thing.

Yeah. I know what you mean. Everything became real specialized. Everything was getting more serious, which is bound to happen. The world wants to control everything—judge it, put boundaries on it, put leashes on it. Tag it, bag it, sell it as much as you can. That's the nature of the world. It's kind of why I chose to sell my company, because, you know, I started out riding. I've been riding my bike since four...a bunch of dirty little kids just riding bikes and building jumps, and it happened to turn into my job, but when I had the chance to go into another business, I thought, "Should I stay in this one business?" I felt like I was staying in it because of the money. The bike thing had become so "business" and most of the reason I was doing it was for money. I just couldn't sell my soul anymore. I spent my life building my name to run that business, and make a living off of it, but after a while, when you know the inside of the industry, you see who's screwing who, who's ripping off who, and you're afraid to come out with a new design, because the bigger companies will have it reproduced and at the show the next day. And they'll say they did it. I don't know how many times I saw that. After a while, I just walked away. The plan was to just go back to riding, just by myself.

Is that what you did?

First of all, I made sure that there were people to run the company and that it was in good hands. I didn't go out and look for the best money I could. I talked to one guy who was a racer himself. He seemed like he would really take care of it and really put his heart into it, and that's who I sold it to. And the plan was to go back and ride by myself as an unknown and that's exactly what I did. That worked for a couple years and then injuries started to show up, and that pretty much ended everything. Now it's cool, I just sit back and watch it on TV, and I can look at the sport and enjoy it for the sport. I can enjoy it for all the same reasons that I got into it from the beginning, and I don't look at it like so-and-so is screwing me for my ideas, blah blah. I don't have any of that bullshit going through my head. I can look at that sport in its purest form. The path I took out of the bike industry was not the smartest financial thing, and I knew that. But, you know, the memories are priceless. You lean on the memories.

// RON WILKERSON

Ron had a knack for pulling off the impossible. Whether it was inventing the Nothing air (during a show, nonetheless) or winging together a competition series on halfpipes that were usually screwed together just hours before the actual events. Ron flew by the seat of his pants and made you want to join him because it looked so fun. This interview is the definition of what it means to be deeply connected and committed to BMX. To read more of his insights into life, liberty, and the pursuit of funanus, look for his forthcoming book, *If You Don't Crash, You're Not Trying Hard Enough*.

How did BMX affect your life?

It's really hard to separate it from my life, because I was growing up as BMX was growing up, and it was kind of like the same thing. BMX was brand new, people making fun of you for riding those little bikes, which no one could even comprehend now. I was a pro rider getting paid to travel the world and do what I loved. It gave me opportunities and set my standards really high. That was my benchmark right there. From then on I couldn't do anything less than that.

What was your favorite photo from an issue of Freestylin'?

Of course it would be the cover of the first one. I don't think there was ever a photo that impacted me as much as that. I won't ever forget when I saw that, getting it in the mail and freaking out. Not to mention that it was the first issue of the first magazine devoted to freestyle. And I was on the cover. Back in the day, every pro was different from every other pro, and *Freestylin'* covered everyone, and you covered them all as if they were equally cool.

Describe the bond that you share with Brian Blyther and Dave Nourie.

Those guys are brothers to me. It's interesting that some of my best memories are around the relationships I had from touring with those two. When you're touring with someone, you're with them more than the person you're married to. You work together, eat together, you do everything together. For three months or six months you're with these people all the time. We were three new pros hanging out traveling the world and living it. There's never gonna be another first generation of BMX pros.

What's the most noticeable way that BMX has changed since then?

Attitudes. It's a whole different thing nowadays. The easiest way to explain it is like, before, people got into it because it was unique and different. Not everyone did it. It was something special, almost like misfits. You were a BMXer. And nowadays people get into it because it's the cool thing to do. And that's very different but if I just go riding, it reconnects me back to what it was for me. I can forget about all the things I don't like or that have changed. Although, nowadays, the level of riding...holy shit! The stuff guys are doing is unbelievable.

How did you learn to push yourself and progress?

Freestyle wasn't really something you learned. You either want to or you don't. And I live my life the same way that I ride or have ever ridden BMX, which is pushing myself as far as I can go all the time. There's a quote, "If you're comfortable then you're doing something wrong." That's my quote for life. I was always doing as much as I possibly could. There was never anything I wished I tried, because I was always trying everything I knew. Going for new things is about desire, just going for it. That's really a personality, not something you can learn or not learn. That's one of the biggest things I've learned in life, about energy. One day I got on my bike to go riding and this thought popped in my head: what would you be the most proud doing? And I was like, "I'll keep doing my bike company." I stuck with it. I've taken out loans from family members and friends and banks. Borrowing money from friends — that's the worst. Not only are you putting yourself on the line, but friendship too, and someone's trust. I have some amazing people who've helped me in my life just by giving me loans when I really needed it. Some of them I'm still paying back. It's remarkable what I've done with bad credit and a bad divorce. I was able to get loans from banks unsecured just strictly by conveying the energy that we're going to do this! And that alone makes me strive to do better.

Describe what a ramp being built smells like.

Every time I smell plywood, it reminds me of building ramps. It's never going to go away. It's the best smell, it gives you this energy. I don't know if new school kids have that experience. Everything's already set up and made.

Pick one of your favorite contest pulling-it-off-by-the-skin-of-your-teeth stories.

I can't separate them because they all run into each other. But probably the biggest would be when we decided to do a vert contest on the barge in Austin. There's an example of new frontiers we were forging, and we pulled it off, which was miraculous. It wasn't the best event, contest wise, but wow, what an experience that was. Someone would roll in and the whole ramp would move. Setting up for that was just unbelievable. We'd just bought a brand new dually and a brand new ten foot tall trailer to bring the ramp from San Diego to Austin, and half way there the truck engine blew, and we had to have a new engine put in. We ended up getting there the night before the contest and stayed up all night building this ramp on a barge. Kevin Martin was the man, the one driving it out.

Do you have any disappointments or regrets?

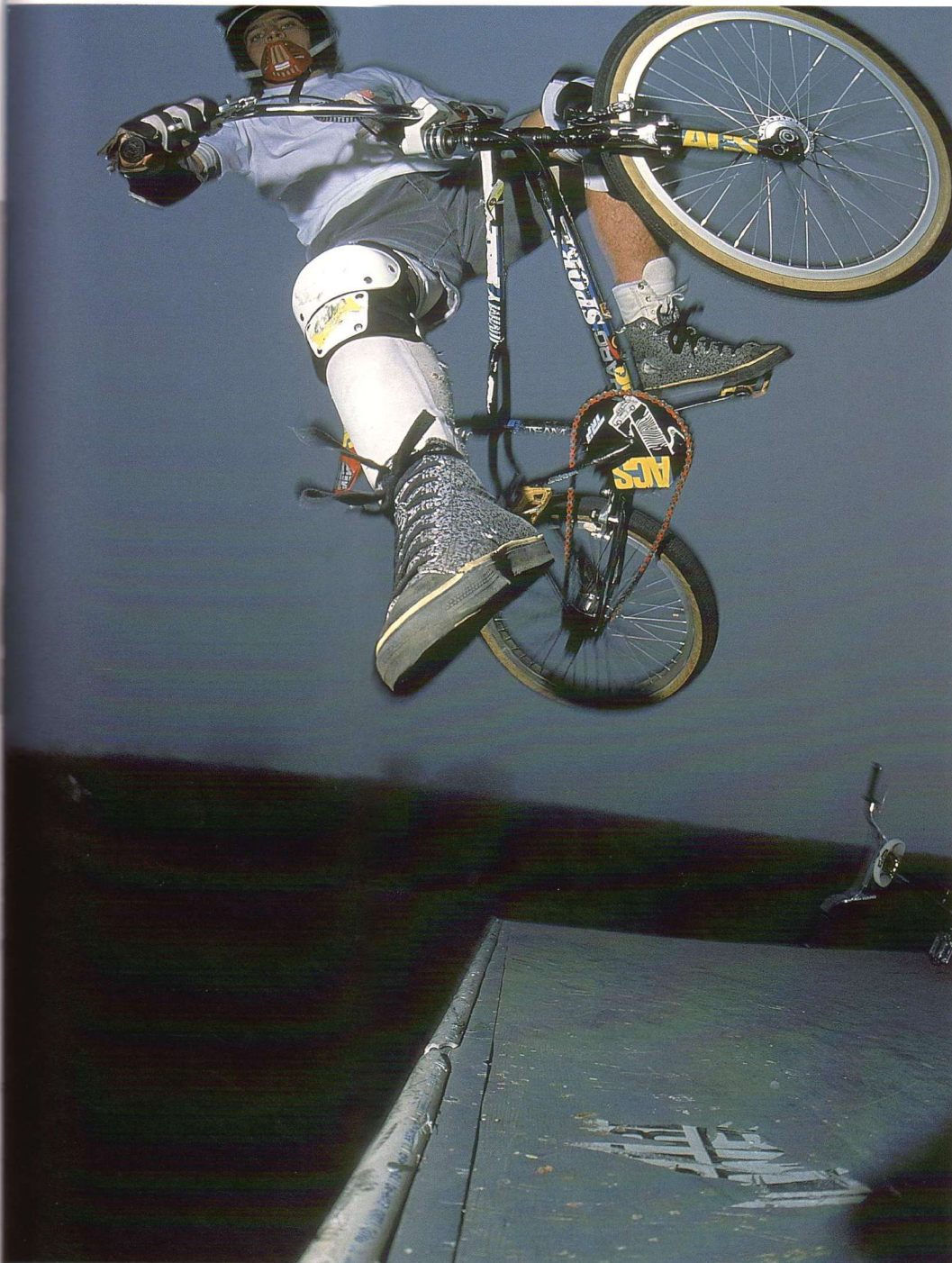
No way. I don't believe in regrets. Do things you want to do, and you can't have any regrets. You can have lessons and learn things and grow from that. But it's about taking risks. That's what life is about in my book: taking risks and just going for it. BMX gave me the opportunity to do something that I

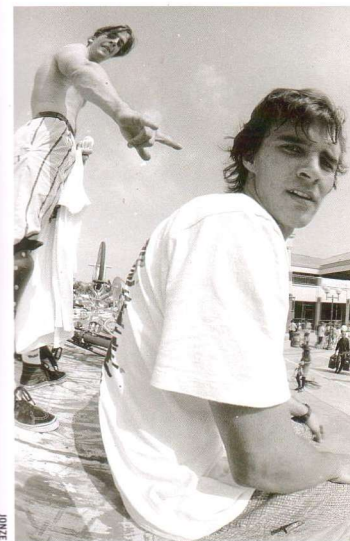


(right) Airborne and looking for a place to plant. This was the last photo shoot with Ron before his crash in Wichita.

GIBBERSON

JONKE





JONZE

(above) Ron throws the horns to his touring bro, Dave Nourie. (left) Livin' la vida lookback on one of the most heavily sessioned halfpipes of all time, the Enchanted Ramp. (spread) Pop pop pop goes the flash. Drop drop drop goes the backwards hopper.

ADNWA

was so into and passionate about that I'd kill myself doing it, and then get better, and keep doing it. Most people don't get to have the experience of breaking their legs or having concussions and wanting to get up and do it again. I was that passionate about something that when I'd recover, I'd want to ride. I was in a coma for five days once. Holy crap.

Spike, Andy, and I were all sitting around trying to pinpoint the exact day that freestyle started to really change and slow down. The day we picked that freestyle got changed, was the day you crashed in Wichita, Kansas.

Yeah, now that I think about it, that was the beginning of the end. And the beginning of the beginning for other people.

Was that the last AFA contest they ever did?

I think it was.

The quarterpipe was definitely done.

It was done way before that. I was trying to get Bob Morales to do halfpipe contests, and he was like, "No, it's going alright, it's going good how it is." And so I started the King of Vert.

You crashed on a Nothing, right? You didn't get your hands back on?

Yeah. I got one hand back on the handlebars and then I hung up. It was like 20 feet to face.

What memories do you have from your recovery?

Eddie Roman was sitting in my living room when one of those commercials for some college came on, you know, make a living, blah blah blah. And I asked Eddie, "What do I do? What's my job?" And he was blown away. He said, "You're a pro bike rider, you travel around the world getting paid to do shows," and I was just like, "I get paid to ride my bike? Whoa!" A week or two later was the first time I rode again. It was totally scary just going down the roll in on the Enchanted ramp. I had to completely relearn everything.

How long did that take?

It happened pretty quickly, because with learning tricks it's all about inner confidence and knowing you can do something. That's probably the biggest part of all of it. So it took a couple months to feel comfortable, but it came pretty fast, because I heard that I already did it. Even tricks I'd invented, like I had to relearn the abubaca. I wasn't allowed to drive for a little while. It was pretty crazy.

Did you have gnarly medical bills?

I don't even remember any medical bills. I guess insurance paid for it. But actually it was the best crash I ever had. I crashed and I don't even remember feeling anything. It was like I was starting out again as a kid, but then progressing rapidly fast. It was probably about the best thing that's ever happened to me.

How so?

You go through something like that and you really appreciate life. You can't ever not really appreciate it again. It just shows you the bigger things, it shows you what's important. I was all religious beforehand, and of course that was dwindling even before the accident, but I was still in it. I still called myself a Mormon. But then after that accident I was just like, hello, here are the things that are important, here are the things that are not important.

What was the scariest part of that crash?

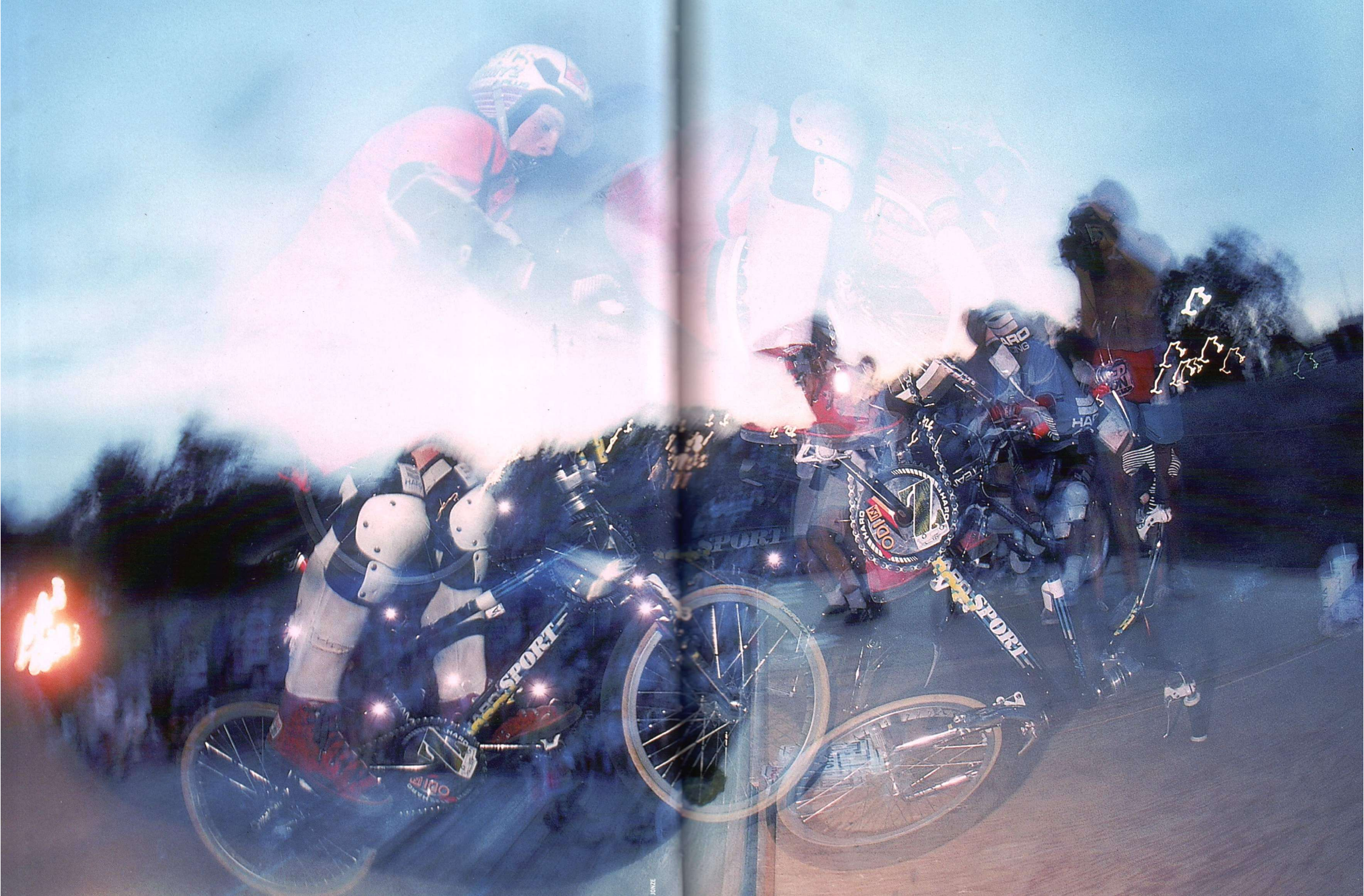
Right at that time, the whole bike business is crumbling, and I'm looking at my future. I had family, kids, a life. I'm trying to figure out what I'm going to do. And I can't even really ride all the way yet. For me the crash was without a question the end of my competitive riding, because to be competitive you gotta have the eye of the tiger, that edge. After the accident, that edge was gone. I'd still ride for fun, and I loved riding, but the whole time I'm considering, you know, what should I do? All my sponsors are dropping off, they got no money, what am I going to do, how am I going to live? And so I made a smart decision [laughter]. I started a company. I started Wilkerson Airlines.

What do you think you've given of yourself to freestyle?

Even when I was making a lot of money as a pro, I knew it wouldn't last. We didn't know how long we could ride. There was no one before us to look at. At 19 or 20 I was thinking I wouldn't get to ride past 25 or 26. We had no idea when we could stop. And of course there are things you give up, like the style of living. But I was happy. Trying to run a bike company with ridiculously little amounts of money, that's been my life. There's been times, and I'm not even that far from it now, where it's like, "How am I going to pay rent this month?" I'd sit there with a stack of bills and not know how to pay them and I just kept working, figuring things would work out. But it's not really a matter of what I gave up for freestyle, it's just what I choose. I didn't give up anything. I put all of myself into it. It was me, it was my life, and you can't separate it.

What was your shining moment — the best thing you ever did?

I like to live in the present. My shining moment was last Thursday when I was riding my BMX bike from my home to the office in downtown Santa Cruz and the sun was out and it was a beautiful day. I've experienced so many astounding things in my life that I couldn't even pick one to highlight. There were so many times we'd be doing demos with screaming girls, walking around being stars and people wanting to meet us. Getting 20 thousand dollar checks in the mail. There was all that. But I think my shining moment was last week riding my bike to work. The fact I can still ride my bike, even after all the injuries, and I'm just pedaling the whole way and smiling, and no one else knows what's going on in my heart.



// MAT HOFFMAN



(right) Rocking Rockville on the Skyway tour circa 1987. Jeff Tremaine is somewhere in that crowd.

The 900. The flair. Over 100 aerial variations. Riding off cliffs and out of airplanes. Building and conquering the giant ramp. Doing demos for Olympics-sized crowds. Doing demos where nobody showed up. Starting a bike company to push product technology forward. Running competitions to bring the BMX community together. Being there to promote, produce, and compete as big media discovered extreme sports. Countless concussions, endless injuries, and over two dozen surgeries during his storied career have put his motto to the test: if you want to experience the rewards of chasing your dreams, you have to be willing to accept the consequences. It's clear that Mat Hoffman found exactly what he was put on this earth to do.

What path would you be on if you hadn't gotten into bikes?

Man, I have no idea. I might be in a padded room. Who knows? I was thinking about how freakin' lucky I am not only to have found freestyle, but to be able to turn it into my livelihood. My body is really jacked up right now. I don't know if I'm gonna get my arm back, and it makes me want to just be like, "Fuck it, I need to learn how to ride one-handed." I know the reality of it is going to be tough, but still, even though I've found other things in my life, everything would take second to the original idea of riding my bike. That's why I think no matter how jacked up I am I just can't let go of the handlebars.

What's your favorite moment from the sport — the shining moment?

The King of Vert over at Ron's [Wilkerson] house. It was the first time I was on the deck with all my heroes. I didn't know that I could session on a similar level to them. It was the first time that I felt a connection with anyone else besides myself in a sense, because I just came from Oklahoma and I rode my bike. I had a real independent passion, and suddenly it was like, "Wow, what can I create with this?" On that deck, I had other people I could share the same thing at the same level with and just contribute to the scene. I felt like I belonged there. I found this new family to adopt.

It wasn't until halfpipe contests started that the connection could get a little deeper between the riders, because the space was a lot smaller. The top guys in the world sitting on deck next to each other.

I think that's what it really was about, the intimate kind of feeling of you, your bike, and that love for what you do. Having that same energy — feeding off each other on the deck.

What did you learn from the AFA and 2-Hip about running your own events?

The AFA contests were different than King of Vert jams. AFA was a staged event — you had 60 seconds. It was too structured to really represent or fulfill that freedom within. What I felt with the AFA is that the whole community knew that things had evolved and progressed into a different world, but the AFA kept their same curriculum and events. That was what inspired me to always make it so the riders direct it, and the riders make it what it is, so one person doesn't try to cookie cutter it. It's ever-evolving. Our sport should be made to be broken and changed. I felt the AFA was rigid. They were never going to change their ramps. Like, when Ron [Wilkerson] took that digger, we all knew that our sport had surpassed what these ramps were capable of giving us. We were really just trying to take the limits we were pushing on other ramps and trying to convert them to these quarterpipes, and the danger was growing, and they still wouldn't change. I think that's what kind of made that animosity, at least for me, when I sensed they didn't want to adapt and change. And coming from the punk rock influence, where it's about celebrating differences and not trying to conform, it was good whenever that spirit kind of broke through all those boundaries. I believe it's always good to shake it all up and see where everything lands. I think seeing what was not right with our sport influenced us to take the reigns. It was like, "Okay, wait a minute, this is our sport — this is ours. We need to knock it down." And that's what I loved about the recession. I seriously am motivated to create another recession for our sport, just to clean it up a little bit, and get it all influenced by the soul of it again. When Ron started 2-Hip, we were all kind of collectively inspired to do things our own way again. That's what inspired me to do the BS Series.

What about the riders? Who'd you look up to?

Dominguez, Josh White, Blyther, Wilkerson. All those guys. But then you had Todd Anderson who would do crazy one-handed one-footed stuff 11 or 12 feet out of an eight-foot quarterpipe. Or there was Bob Kohl who was all goofy-footed and just doing lookbacks with his bars backwards, which throws a monkey wrench into the way you thought style was going to evolve. It created a whole other perspective. Bob was doing backflips on motorcycles back before anyone even thought of it. That was a guy who got overshadowed whenever it became big.

We printed your first photo in a magazine. What did *Freestylin'* represent for you growing up?

Freestylin' was like the bible. I was never more passionate about a piece of paper or literature. When the magazine would come, you'd read it from front to back — you'd look at every ad. That was everything about our sport. You could recite every article. It was just wild how much a magazine meant to me, but also to everyone as a community, and now I don't see that anymore. I just totally lost that. I don't even really look at magazines anymore. It's kind of weird how it went away with





you guys. It just shows the power of that book. Even the Club Homeboy thing. You guys were the first to see that it was about a lifestyle.

None of us knew what we were doing as far as being professionally trained. Everyone was learning how to take pictures and how to edit and how to write. We weren't really that good at it, other than we just had the heart.

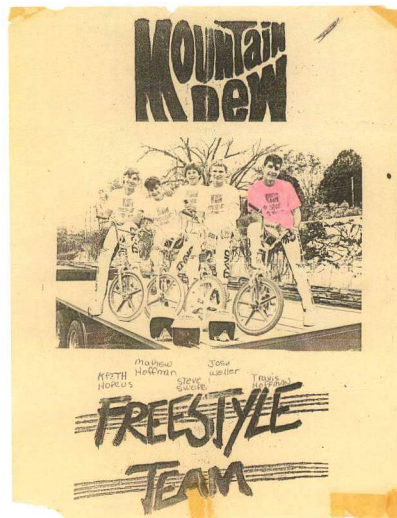
And that's a good point, man, because none of us were trained in anything we did, we just kind of made it up, even when it came to making bikes or starting a business. Anything. And I think that was the whole point. For me, I worked really hard to not learn how it was done, because I wanted to do it how it was in me to be done. I felt like if I learned it I would just automatically, just instinctually do it that way. I tried hard to de-educate myself so I would feel pure about whatever I created, good or bad. We learned in the school of life.

Isn't that what summer tours were about?

It's a crazy way to grow up. They were about having an excuse to jump in a van with a bunch of friends and travel around the world together — vans, hotels and riding in parking lots for three months out of the year. And that was a thing that everybody in the whole community looked forward to, the riders coming through their town. That was such a crazy time, and it doesn't seem like it'll ever be repeated. It's the weirdest thing that it worked out so naturally when it did. It was almost just expected from the bike shops then that they would have a great team of riders come through every summer. I run across people around my age who tell me, "Man, the first time I saw you was some podunk place in the middle of nowhere." I don't even remember being there, and that got them into riding. It's such a privilege that I got that opportunity, because it was so short-lived. All those memories. I'm talking about it like it was a five or ten year time, but really it was two years, '87 and '88.

Last question. Was it worth it?

It was worth every broken bone I have, because I love what I do.

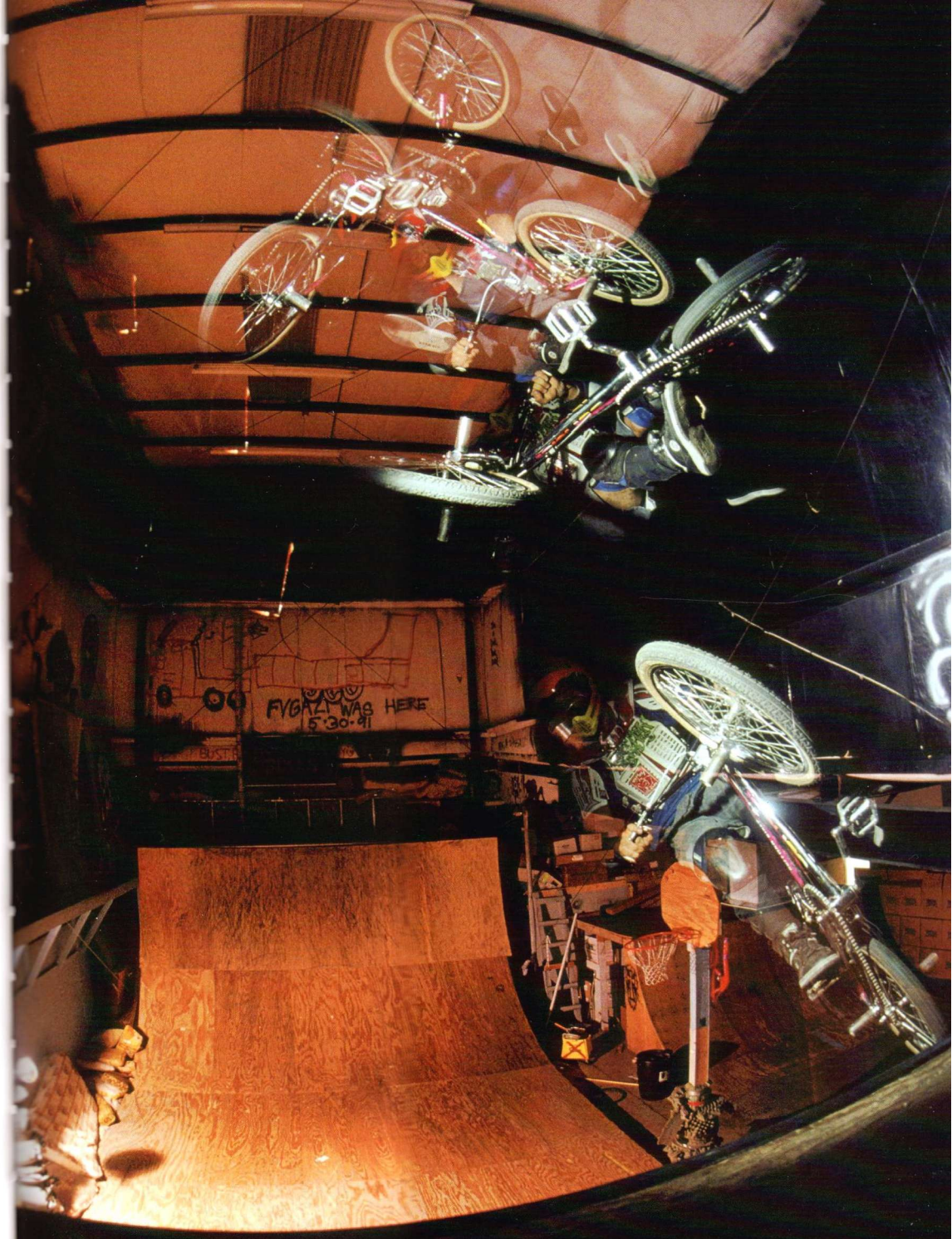


The photo and flyer were sent into Freestylin' in 1986 by an unknown kid from Edmond, Oklahoma. Probably the last time Mat Hoffman was anonymous.

(right) Ninja ramp tailwhip sequence on a single frame of film. Mat and Spike did good tricks together.

(spread) Blasting a double can-can as Mike Golden and Marty Schlesinger look on in sun-baked disbelief.

COURTESY OF MAT HOFFMAN







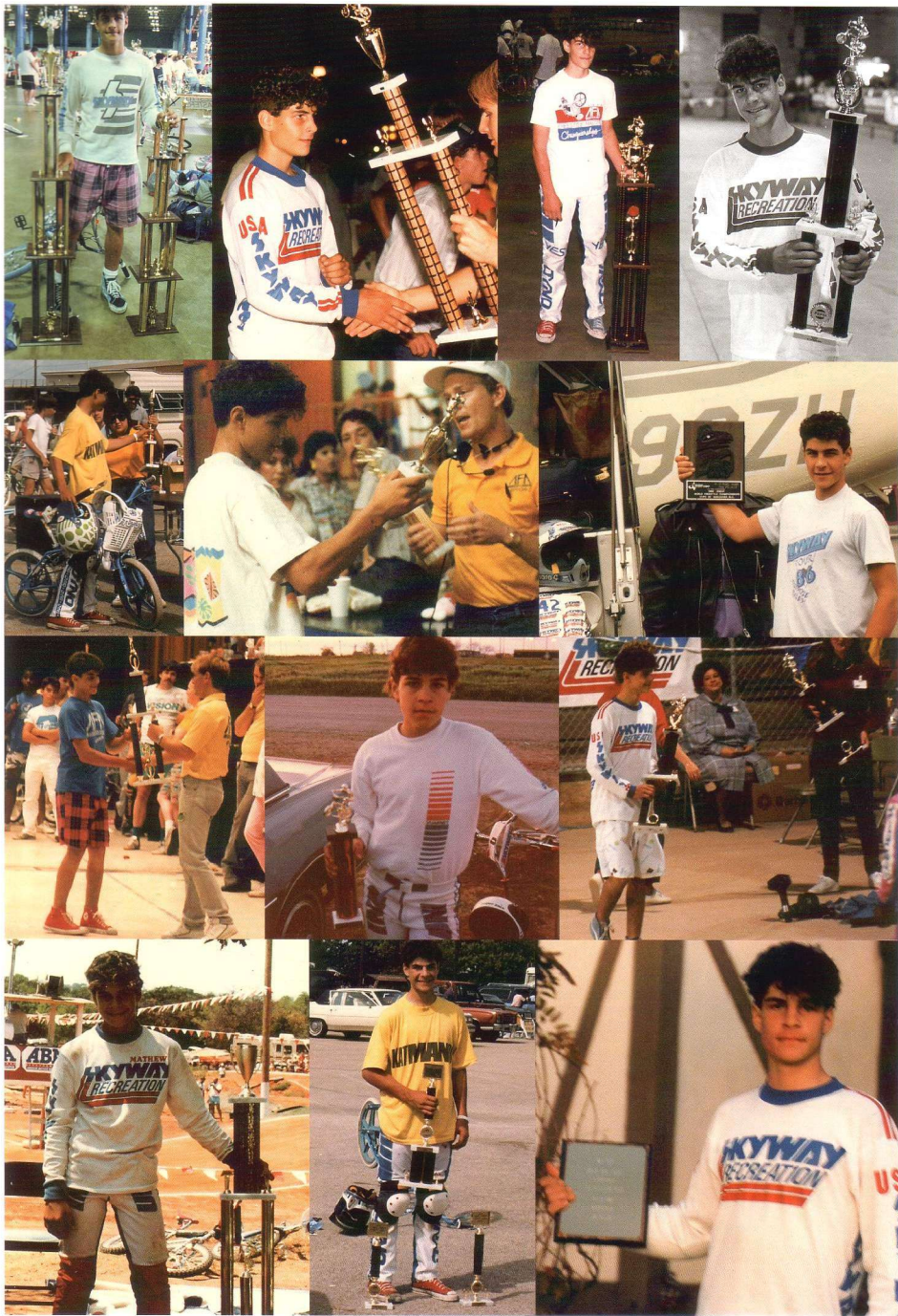
(above) The bashguards-n-headbands era of street riding. Mat gets grungy and tickles the top of the bricks.
 (right) Broken bike part graveyard under the ramp.
 Every single component in there exploded in the line of duty. What does that tell you about Mat's body?
 (opposite) Stretch it like you mean it. Mat, wooing the masses on his first tour.



JUNZE

GROBESON





COURTESY OF MAT HOFFMAN



IONZE

// CHRIS MOELLER

16-year-old Chris Moeller's role at Wizard Publications was hucking tucked no-handers and bomb dropping bus drivers for *BMX Action* magazine as a test rider. But we (or rather, *BMXA* editor Gork) readily realized this kid had more to give. And Moeller, happy to turn a quick buck, began pulling double-duty as a utility worker at the Wizard warehouse. We can define "utility worker" as handling everything from writing stories to emptying the cat box, to making off with piles of surplus Club Homeboy paraphernalia to do grassroots promotion at BMX nationals (i.e. unauthorized sticker sales). Moeller's sassy backtalk and innovative manhandling of the steel horse made him a staff favorite. Any time Chris was around he was making people laugh, making people super mad, or eliciting a reaction of total respect for his bike control. Often it was all three things at the same time.



What was your impression of working at the magazine at 16?

I wasn't a magazine guy. I never read the magazine really. I was more like a BMX mercenary at 16. I was trying to get to Wizard to make seven bucks an hour. I wasn't in there all awestruck, I was just trying to make my money and get back to Orange for a double pointer. I was in a different place. I couldn't care less if those top freestyle guys, you know, if Woody Itson pulled up in a Porsche with a bike in the back. I was doing my own thing. Besides, by the time I got over to Wizard I was already kind of a seasoned vet. I'd been driving around in that van with those Peddlepower guys on tour. Driving to Shreveport, Louisiana, in a van completely full of hash smoke for three days, and then having to come home on Monday morning and go to school, and then trying to get out to the track on Wednesday night. And then drive over to Wizard. I look back on it all, and I was having a lot of fun back then, but I always had kind of a BMX mercenary mentality. I still do. I've never been at the level of Hoffman and those guys, so I gotta take what I can get and make what I can with it.

Is it tough running a business with bike riders as employees?

My attitude on that is that I'd rather see all those guys make it as riders. If they're going to make it as riders, it's pretty obvious early on. Most guys, if they're going to ride for a living, you can tell by age 15 or 16. If they've made it to 24 packing boxes then, yeah.

Isn't there more opportunity with the sport being bigger than it was before?

Visorless Moeller in a teeny chest protector doing his best impersonation of a bowling ball. (right) Cyclone fence carve on 190th Street in Torrance.

WINDY



JONZE



"MY RECOMMENDATION TO
THE NEW GUYS IS TO LET IT FLY
BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT GOING
TO GET A SECOND CHANCE."

It's difficult to stand out nowadays. Maybe it was back in the '80s, but now you need to bring something really creative riding-wise or personality-wise. You need to bring something to stand out from the hordes of other guys that are all doing the same tricks that look basically the same. A lot of those guys are going to have a short-lived relevance in the scene. I mean, there're guys who can do all those moves and are technically really good riders, but they won't be around five years from now and they sure as hell won't be around 10 years from now because they haven't said anything or done anything that's interesting or unique. That's the problem. If you want longevity you have to have the whole package. And I don't know if it's something you want to sit around and try and concoct, or if certain people just have it naturally, and certain people don't.

Did you draw any influence from freestyle as a rider to progress what you could do jumping and learning variations?

I remember seeing a photo of Craig Campbell from that Pipeline contest doing that X-ed-up can-can. I brought that over to dirt. Stuff like that is weird on dirt because you're moving forward the whole time. In that era you didn't go up and peak and come back down, everything was long and low. There wasn't a lot of tranny, so you just kind of did stuff moving forward, whereas with vert you go up, stop, come down. I think it's interesting to see where a lot of these tricks originally came from. Skate tricks come from surf tricks, and BMX tricks used to come from skate or motocross, and now it's gone backwards and now motocross tricks come from BMX tricks, and surf tricks are now coming from motocross and BMX. People do Supermans on surfboards now. They do big airs and grab both rails. So now it's all over the place. I always thought it would be interesting to see a progression of where all these moves come from. Surfing is the original action sport in my mind. BMX was essentially motocross for kids that couldn't ride motorcycles. So the roots of BMX racing are kind of questionable if you ask me. If you want to do the real thing, then race motocross. Freestyle was the first truly unique version of 20-inch riding. BMX racing is just a bad imitation of motocross.

Riding today has gotten really technical.

Today there are guys that systematically perfect maneuvers. Foam pits, resi ramps, all this stuff. Systematic perfection of maneuvers. You watch it now and it's gymnastics. You've got guys doing flips and tailwhip flips and double front flips. I was flipping through the new *Ride* yesterday and Mirra's doing a tailwhip off the roll-in on one of these super ramps. The ramp is about 50 feet tall, it doesn't look like anyone's been on it in like a 100 years, the wood's peeling up at all the seams, and here he is in that Shirley Muldowney dragster helmet and he's tailwhipping off the top of it. That's just not my brand of...

Come on, though. That's gnarly!

It's super gnarly, but that's just not my brand of riding.

In that *Homeboy* magazine interview, you were talking about BSR — Bicycle Soul Riding.

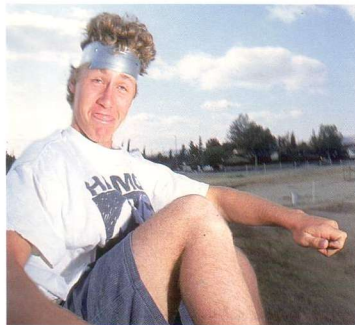
I skated long before I rode, and surfed before that, so coming from those sports kind of changed the way I looked at BMX. Even racing. I always rode turns differently than other kids because I was used to carving on a skateboard or surfboard. I think that bicycle soul riding stuff I was talking about came from growing up as a surfer with my dad. I subconsciously brought that in. Other kids were maybe bringing more football or something to bikes. Even in the *Freestylin'* days, the guys that I was interested in were like Jason Parkes and Pete Augustin. I liked to mix the skating and the biking, and I liked people that did both. I still like guys that do all kinds of stuff: skateboard, ride, motocross, surf. I mix it up, too. It makes it hard to be really good at any of them, because you're trying to do five different things.

But you were still really focused back in the day. Your riding was...

There was no systematic perfection of maneuvers when I was at Wizard. It was just kind of like, "Hey, here's this jacked up Hanter 777, you're going to go down that hill right there, hit a pile of dirt, and launch off the backside of a mountain." So a couple years of that back then, and now nothing really seems like that big of a deal when it comes to photo shoots and stuff. I kind of like having that background. My riders think I'm exaggerating when I tell them this stuff. I don't even tell them anymore actually because they're sick of hearing it, but Windy would say, "Yeah, that looked pretty good. Do about 20 more of those." 20? No shit. 20 or 30 more of those. I went with Windy one time to somewhere in Mission Viejo and I was doing these tuck no-handers over this double that had a tree in the middle and I kept going through the trees, and it was, "Do 20 more." And it's a serious athletic endeavor. You gotta go back up the hill and come at it again and again for 50 bucks. I don't know. I'm glad I stuck to it, I'm glad I was kind of serious about it. At least I was trying to knock these photo shoots out. A couple of years of getting all that coverage in that magazine. I look back on that time as being critical to realizing that anything is possible.

Racing, jumping, street riding, soul riding — all that built up your name right when you started S&M.

I couldn't have started it without all that. I couldn't have done anything. Now I'm off on three-week surf trips to wherever. I've got my own bowl at work. It's a pretty good set up. I'm feeling the effects of it now, and my recommendation to the new guys is to let it fly because you are not going to get a second chance to do it. But back then it was a good time. Funny though, because half the time I didn't know what the hell I was doing. But you do it enough times...



JONZE



(top) Remember that time you were throwing no-footed X-ups in Newport? Me neither.

That's because you never learned that trick.

Chris Moeller did.

(right) Turn down tabletop during the days of BMX Action test riding. Possibly the last time Chris wore goggles.

WINDY

// KEVIN JONES

The Plywood Hoods were a posse of groundbreaking riders living in York, Pennsylvania. They rode, published zines, produced videos, made T-shirts, traveled to various freestyle hotspots and happenings, and then rode some more. Hood Kevin Jones was a furnace burning full blast, his every waking moment consumed with creating and challenging himself on his bike. Catapulted into national attention for his ground control, it was easy to overlook the fact that the guy was a good skatepark shredder, dirt jumper, and even breakdancer (pre-dating the Plywood Hoods, The K was in the Cardboard Lords). Kevin's intensity shined so brightly and for so long, even today, ground riders worldwide mythologize him, and more importantly, still use his tricks.

What would you have been if you hadn't gotten into BMX?

I'd probably be in jail. It's hard to say though, because I got into that so early, like right off the bat. I'm 40, and I've done it for over 30 years. Basically it's all I've done or even thought about my whole life.

What's your process in coming up with a new trick?

Some tricks take a long time, and some concepts are sort of gradual. It might've been 20 years later when I finally figured out a way to incorporate a trick into a real combo rather than just being some impossible hard little thing. Okay, tricks and combos as opposed to routines.

Definitely. I don't have any kind of routines. I don't think of it that way. I'm not trying to ride that way.

What was your shining moment in freestyle, in terms of contests?

The Texas contest, because I just prepared for it for three or four months. To me that's a long time. I had a few offers right after I was done with my run, like business cards or whatever. I chose Skyway because it just seemed cool. They had a cool team and it seemed like I would fit in better there than anywhere else.

Didn't Rick Moliterno win that contest?

Yeah, he did a flawless routine, and he ended up with first place. I guess my goal was just to get in the top ten. So to get second place was awesome as hell.

What was your favorite photo of yourself?

I guess the cover shot, because it's just really nice, the no-handed stuff. It's unique because there's no other shots of that trick. It's the only photo of it — it's the top view, and I remember saying, "Here, look, I can do it no-handed."

What was the most shocking thing you ever saw on a bike?

I would say the 900, because I actually rode enough to try 360s and 540s, and then seeing that evolve to the 900, and then obviously Mat Hoffman busted out the no-handed 900. You know, that's just too insane, too much to think about. It's awesome that someone would push it that hard. That's probably what I would do if I was trying to push it as hard as possible.

How do you feel now about how you were promoted or marketed? The one ad I'm thinking of has you and Eddie Roman in it. That was a pretty classic ad. Do you have any thoughts about that?

Yeah, I was pretty bummed out about having a cheesy ad like that. At the time I thought I would just do what I wanted to do, but it doesn't always work out that way I guess. I did try to ask about it, and I clearly said that I'm not going to do a cheesy ad like that, and they were like, "No, no, no, it'll be real cool and you'll have input in it." You know, whatever.

Have you invented any bike components?

They're more specialized and very complicated, not really practical for an average kid. So I didn't market any of those things. You might want to sell it to like a 100 people or less. From when I started I was always trying to rig and change things, and just make my own little parts. You remember when I made the gyro out of the plumbing parts in your dad's garage? I just grabbed a couple parts and put them together, and I was like, "Oh my god, I can make a rotor out of it." Then I brought it back the next day and it worked, and it was on my bike.

How would you like to be remembered for what you accomplished as a freestyle rider?

On the computer and looking at magazines, it seems that my name pops up a lot. Like with overseas magazines, there'll be a young flatlander that's been riding for a couple years that's doing really well and they'll mention my name. And that's awesome, I wouldn't really expect that, because where did they get their information, and why do they even care? Like a 14-year-old kid in some other country actually knows my name and says something about me.

Talk about Dave Mirra's energy when he was little and he came up to ride with you? Didn't he get up way earlier than you and he'd be working on his bike?

Yeah, he was a maniac. Of course, he's like several years younger so he had way more energy. I mean we had tons of energy, and then he was younger and non-stop. I wasn't annoyed by it, I thought it was awesome. That's exactly how I was many years ago.

What riders out there do you most respect?

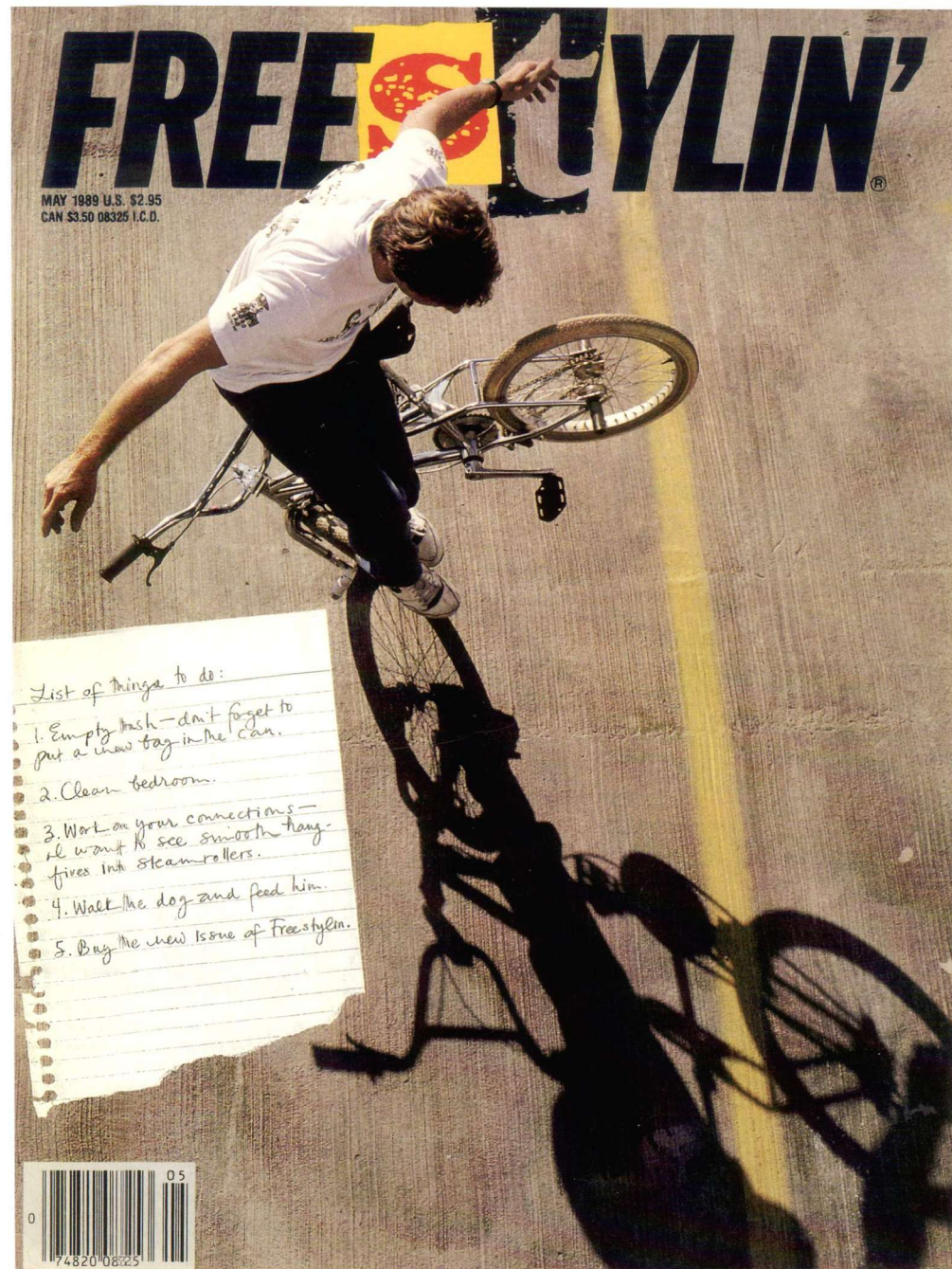
Pretty much anyone who's into it and is excited about bicycles and riding. That's the main thing. I don't have a big list of idols or favorites or whatever. I could be driving my car down the street and see a group of kids practicing in an alleyway, and I'm totally down for that.

Was there ever a point where you thought tricks would be exhausted?

Well, not that it would be exhausted, but just that I never thought the interest would be there for the general public. It's very strange and different—specifically flatland freestyle. It's so different. People don't really understand it. And the riders don't want to change it, they just want to do it. If you ask someone on the street who a good flatlander is, they'd be like, "What's flatland?" It's not really mainstream, even though it's out there.

Go through your process of learning a trick.

First off, learning a trick that's already a common trick is a little bit easier, because obviously you're looking at it and seeing how it's done, and you just try to do the same thing. That's pretty simple. Just a matter of a couple hundred





(above) Aggro Rag shirt intact, Scuffuluffagus takes it to the town of Carlsbad, California. (following spread) A moment of contemplation from the Plywood Hoods. Mike Daily (not pictured, away at Lock Haven University), Brett Downs, Dale Mitzel, Jamie McKulik, Mark "Lungmustard" Eaton. The K, circling.

tries before you get it. As far as coming up with a new trick and learning it, that's a whole other story. The huge part of it is figuring out what it's going to be and how you're going to do it — how it's going to work. Then it's a matter of piecing it together. I would basically start out learning everything associated with it from beginning to end. And then just try to learn all the pieces in between, anything you can do inch towards it. And then it's just a matter of elimination, like whatever piece you can't do you gotta learn that, and once you learn that, then there's the next piece until it's all done.

The tricks I'm thinking of that probably had to be pieced together like that were the Locomotive, the Caboose, Death Truck, and Hitchhiker. Did those take you a while to learn?

It probably took several hundred hours to master, but if you're riding everyday constantly, then it goes by in a matter of only a few weeks. The hitchhiker was maybe a week. So it just depends on what the trick is and how much time you're going to put into it. It's how much effort you put into it and how excited you are. I've pulled a trick first try that I thought of. And then other tricks, maybe hundreds of thousands of tries later I pulled it.

The first main trick that you became known for from the Texas contest was probably the Locomotive, and then that Locomotive glide.

I was just sort of messing around with my friends going, "Look, check out this." And more or less simulated what it would be. My imaginary trick.

Yeah, I mean scuffing that trick was one thing. Gliding it was a whole other. And you did it in your routine, you pulled off that major glide, and the crowd was just going insane.

I could've easily slammed it. Even now I don't do it that often. At that point it was kind of difficult and definitely risky. But I don't know, it was more just fun to see if I could do it. And if I didn't, no big loss.

What satisfies you?

I don't know if I search to be satisfied, I just get excited over new things and new ideas and new things that I could do. And of course I love riding bikes, so that's my main focus.

Did people ever think that you might have been conceited or full of yourself?

I've heard people say those kinds of things. That would make sense because in the earlier days when I was practicing, I was just so focused on what I wanted to do. I want to go ride, I don't want to waste time sitting around talking about riding. I just want to go do it. I don't want to talk about stuff that was done earlier, because that's in the past.

How come you haven't tried to start a company or get your name on products?

It's never been my focus. I don't think of all those things being associated with bike riding. Like trying to make money. It's never been there from the get go. I got into it so I'd have something challenging to do, and hopefully have some kind of influence. But I mean it's a poor choice for a money-making profession.

What sparked your interest in breakin'?

I was always interested in gymnastics type things. Not sports, but running and jumping and doing handstands and flips. Obviously breakdancing was awesome; spins and whips and tricks you could try to bust out and throw your own thing together. It's like the best thing ever if you're great at it.

You were into more of the gymnastics side of it rather than the music and cultural side of it?

Ultimately I was trying to learn as much as I could and then come up with my own things and just try to advance it. At the point where I was at my best, I was starting to delve into things that other people haven't done. That's when I got back into flatland and started trying all the tricks and incorporating a little bit of the breakdance knowledge into the bike.

People would go crazy when you would do headspins.

Yeah, all that stuff was pretty new, for York at least. The headspins nobody really did. I knew it was a great trick, but nobody really took it that far, like people would do two or three, and I was like, what about ten? That would be a real trick. So I just practiced it. Sometimes I'd have a knee pad under a hoodie. Just zip it really tight, because otherwise on your head it was just tortuous — you couldn't just grind your head into the floor. Friction would rip your hair out.

How is your relationship with Chase Gouin?

It was awesome when he first got to York. He was really good and did awesome routines and seemed really cool.

You guys were out there riding ten plus hours a day?

I'd say we'd be riding by nine in the morning 'til dark, and a lot of times after dark. I haven't seen him in a long time, but everything's cool. We're just so far apart. Hopefully he'll be able to come around here and ride again. It'd be good to hang out.

Are there ever any tricks that you're working on where you think in the back of your mind, "I wonder if Chase has thought of this?"

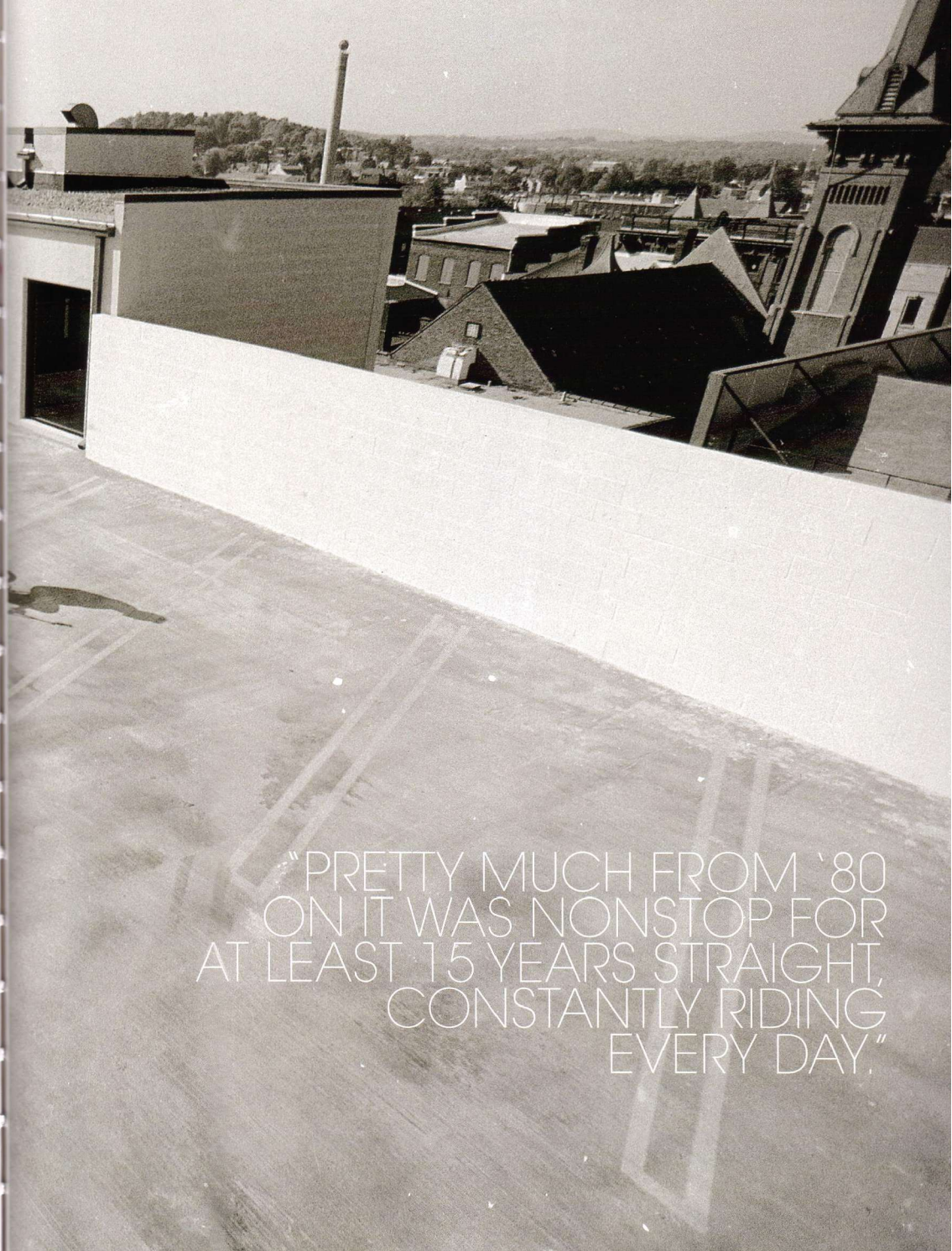
That's a good question, but no, not really. I don't really wonder about that kind of thing. It's not that often that I do think of something and it turns out that somebody has already thought of it. So no, not really.

When was the height of your obsession with riding?

Pretty much from '80 on it was nonstop for at least 15 years straight, constantly riding every day.

Did you ever think you'd be riding this long?

I never saw a reason for an end in my mind so it doesn't seem crazy. When I first started, I thought five years would be forever, and beyond that I had no idea. And then that came and went real fast, and I thought about it again, like, "Oh yeah, another five years isn't that long. I'll surely still be doing it." Then it's like, after 20 or 25 years it's pretty much just there. It's not going away and I don't want it to go away. But I'm not obsessed with it like I used to be—I didn't ride today and it's not killing me. But if I had a trick I wanted to learn, it would be. I'd have to be riding in the living room, because it's raining.



"PRETTY MUCH FROM '80
ON IT WAS NONSTOP FOR
AT LEAST 15 YEARS STRAIGHT,
CONSTANTLY RIDING
EVERY DAY."

// WOODY ITSON IS...

(check all that apply):

- ☐ A power-move pioneer who brought breakdancing to BMX bikes.
- ☐ The first flinger of 540s.
- ☐ A titan of touring who took the parking lot tango from Topeka to Tampa.
- ☐ The nice guy from the OC, rolling deep on a 24-karat Trick Star.
- ☐ A natural-born accountant with a flair for flatland.
- ☐ A crowd favorite.
- ☐ A long-haired skatepark urchin sponsored by Bassett.
- ☐ Was once forced to grow a utility mustache.

Keep reading.

You were one of the first touring riders. When did you first see freestyle catching fire?

It was weird to go from doing shows when there were maybe 20 or 30 people to the days where you'd roll up in the middle of nowhere and you're thinking, "There's no one that even lives out here," and then there's a thousand people waiting for you in the parking lot. I mean, at any time there could be 300 kids showing up wearing uniforms to watch you. It was shocking. I remember going to the AFA Masters in New Jersey and having to use security to get us into the building. I remember going into Hutch to get the trailer and taking off on tour for two months, and when I came back there were three trash bags full of mail. I thought, "This is impossible!" I spent the better part of three months answering letters and got through half a trash bag.

What was the difference between being a contest rider and a show rider?

You get to a point where you're either going to practice your contest routines, or you're going to go on the road. You really can't do both and be effective at them. I could go out there and do a 30-minute show almost by myself after being on the road for so long. But I remember getting injured and being off my bike for a little while, and then showing up at one of the contests back east and seeing Kevin Jones ride. I felt like I'd been away from the sport forever, and there was just a new level of riding that was taking place. Then I realized that that's what contests were all about — progression. I had a big problem forcing myself to do that. In my mind, when people showed up to see me at a contest, they showed up to see me do my tricks, not Kevin Jones' tricks. I'd do some of the new stuff, but I kind of stuck to what I wanted to do. Hutch never put too much pressure on me. It wasn't until I rode for Diamondback that it was more about, "You need to stay at the top. You need to win."

How did you come up with the 540?

It was a total accident. I loved doing fakies, and I had a coaster brake, so back then I could do two-foot fakie aerials and not think anything of it. So I started trying 360s, but I was staying below the coping and coming out backwards. I remember one time over-rotating and landing on the coaster brake, and the nose of my bike swung around. I rode right out of it. It seemed like after I did it once, I could do it every time.

Early on there was a weird connection between breakdancing and freestyle. You were guilty of and good at both. What was your breakin' crew called?

The Major Chain Breakers. We wore special breakdancing shoes, and we did a tour through Japan for two weeks — me, Martin, and a couple of breakdancers. We were going all over the place doing demos and breakdancing shows. It was pretty cool.

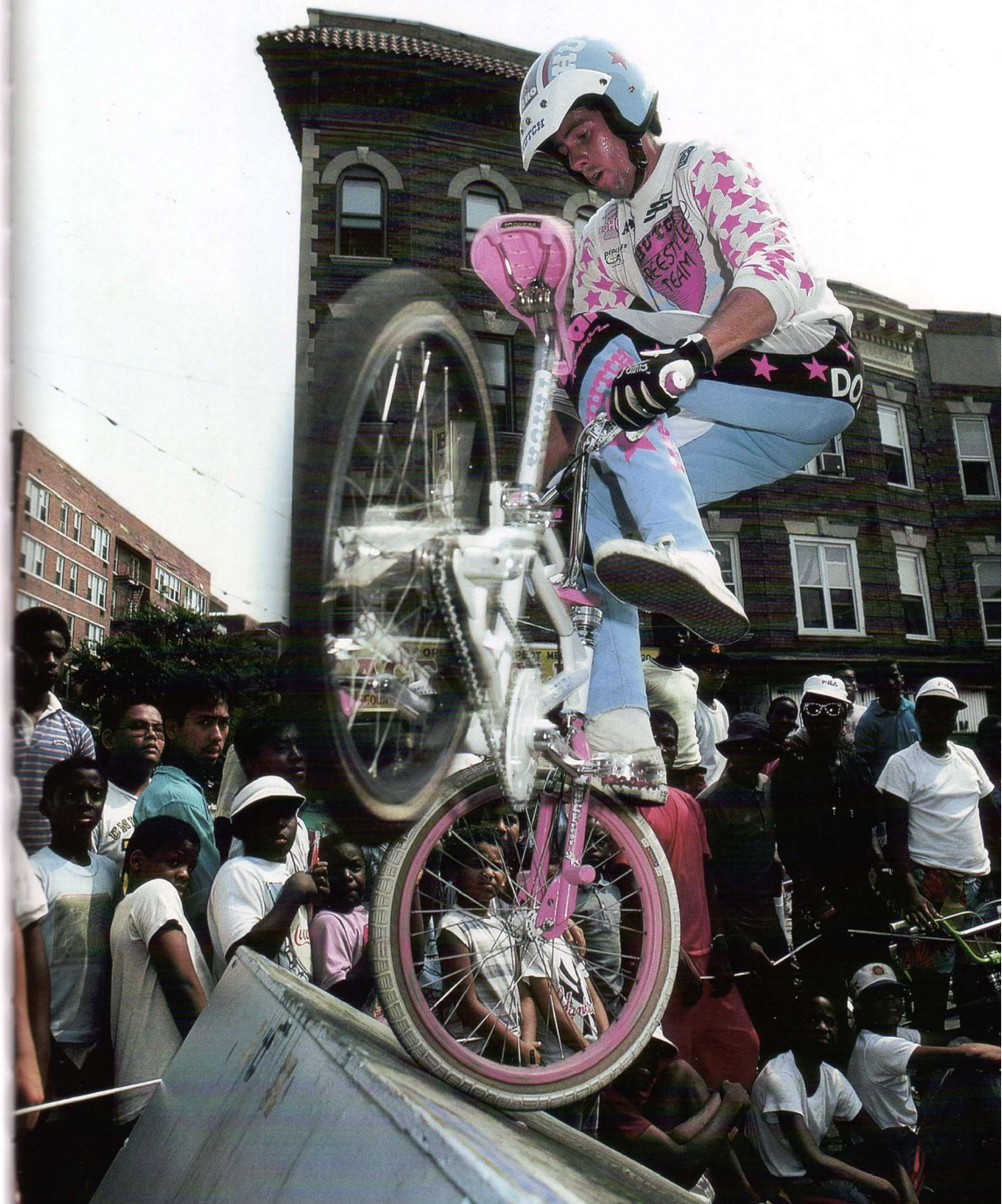
What was an eye-opening peek into the bike industry for you?

I didn't understand any politics back then. One day a photographer told me, "You win here tonight and you'll get a lot more coverage." I didn't realize that if your sponsor advertised in the magazine, you probably got in the magazine a little more.

The gold-plated Hutch is one of the most iconic bikes in the history of the sport. How'd that come about?

A lot of that had to do with when Michael [Dominguez] left Hutch to go ride for Diamondback. The big talk was that I was going to ride for Diamondback, too. They approached me, but I said I really liked riding for Hutch. I told Richard [Hutchins] that. One day I showed up at Hutch, and he said, "Hey buddy, I have a surprise for you." There it was. Holy crap! I did a photo shoot with you guys and had the cover of *BMX Action* riding the golden bike. I was going on tour, and Hutch was worried about me taking the golden bike, and so was I — so I left it at home. I made a futuristic black Trick Star and

Woody, breaking into a sweat as he works over a hot wedge ramp.





GIBERSON



COURTESY OF WOODY ITSON

(left) Be glad you're not his left grip. (top) Itson creeps across the smooth floor of a contest pavilion in some nameless armory, searching for victory in pro flatland. (above) Hands down, the most awesome bike in freestyle.

Hutch gave me gold components. Sure enough, that summer in New York, someone broke into our trailer and took everything, and that's when the rumor spread that my gold bike got stolen...but it was just the wheels that got jacked.

You were the first guy to get coverage on a pink bike.

After riding chrome for so many years and then candy apple reds and blues, it was time to do something different. Not very long after getting that pink bike, we did a show in Pasadena, Texas at Gilley's. I was in my Hutch uniform, pink bike. We did the show inside the rodeo arena, and as I was leaving, there was a guy standing there with a couple girls, wearing a big hat, belt buckle, the whole cowboy getup. He said, "Gotta be some kind of a man to dress like that and ride a pink bicycle." And I smiled at him and said, "You know, I was thinking the same thing about that hat and belt buckle you have on." The girls laughed, and he laughed. After that, I figured, "If you can rock a pink bike in Pasadena, Texas, and not get killed, you're pretty good."

Did you ever get any flack for riding out in the street with a uniform on?

It never bothered me because I figured people were paying me to do that job. I liked having a nice bike and gear. It looked so dialed, and I liked that. I wasn't trying to make myself look stupid back then. When you look back at people in the 80s, we all looked kind of dorky. To look like that today you gotta work hard at it. The kids who ride for me now say, "Nice mustache, nice pink bike, nice leathers," and I'm like, "Look, I might've worn leathers but I never walked around in girls' pants." Say what you want, but nowadays everyone's growing bad mustaches on purpose. People don't realize I grew that mustache because I knocked my teeth in doing a show and I had a metal bar in my mouth. I had to hide the scar and the scab. I was jacked for a good 30 days before they took the bar out of my mouth. I've had half a dozen bridges since then.

How did that wreck happen?

Back then, we'd do shows on any kind of surface, and you couldn't adjust the vert on the ramps. At a show in Baltimore, Maryland we set up the ramp on an uphill slope, and it was over-vert. I landed front-wheel-first on an aerial, my Z-Rim flexed, and that was it. Straight to the ground. I didn't even get my hands off my bars. Two months later I was back on my bike in Indianapolis.

Were you still using Z-Rims?

[Laughs.] No, I switched over to the RL Edge rims. I called ACS and said, "I think I've been giving a competitive advantage to the guys I complete against by running Z-Rims and funky brakes."

What was the gnarliest thing you ever saw on a bike?

It was pretty cool to see Jose Yanez do the flip for the first time. I gotta say, that was pretty trippy — considering he couldn't bunnyhop up a curb. He was one of the nicest guys in the whole world, though, and he was so funny to be around. I asked him, "How'd you learn how to do this, Jose?" And he said, "Oh, I was just at the river one day practicing. I did it on a motorcycle first, but I couldn't get anyone to sponsor me, so I figured I'd do it on a bike. Besides, it's easier to drag a bike out of the water than it is the motorcycle."

Did freestyle ever start to fade for you?

Yeah, my last year on Diamondback. I was maybe four or five years older than most of the next set of riders, and there were even younger riders under them, and I didn't want to be the milkman — the guy that hung on for dear life and squeezed his sponsors to keep him around for another year or two. I think that last year I might've come in top three or four in the AFA Masters, and I was like, "I can live with that." I really didn't have it in me anymore. Guys like [Rick] Moliterno and [Dennis] McCoy were out there paying their dues 10 to 12 hours a day. When you're 21, 22, 23, and you're on the road with 18 and 19 year olds, you kind of have different things you like to do for fun. I was never the drinker or the partier, so I really wasn't fitting into the whole scheme of the way things were moving.

Do you have a shining moment from that time?

My first photo in *BMX Action* was of me riding at the skatepark. I rode in the pool a little bit for Oz and Steve Giberson, but I couldn't do much. I could kind of see the look on their faces, like, "We came all the way out here to see this?" And I was like, "OK, let's go back here," and I could see the look on their faces change when I started flying out. When that photo came out, I had racers, freestylers, everybody going, "Dude, that was one of the raddest photos I have ever seen." I was pretty stoked about that.

If you could do it all over again, what era would you choose for your riding career?

If I had my choice of being in the X Games era or the one I was in, I think I found the right era for myself. I don't think training at Woodward and falling from 25 or 30 feet in the air is my thing. But every time I watch Jamie Bestwick ride a bike, I always wish that for one day I could know what it's like to ride like that.



// EDDIE FIOLA

He could air like a kite and land like a cat. He was GT's icon when they needed a legend. He tamed Upland and took the crown. He toured the world and back, heard the roar of the crowd, saw the pop of the flash, felt the brush of fame, and kept on rolling. He rode the transition into Hollywood, where he's at home behind the scenes, planning the stunts and taking the slams. All of it possible because once upon a time he rolled into a pool, just to see if he could pop out on the opposite side. Long live the king.

Who was the first person you saw riding bikes in a skatepark?

Tinker Juarez. I saw Tinker in the skatepark, and I stopped skating and swapped over towards bicycles and doing jumps. Lakewood skatepark had a lot of hips so we rode it more like a BMX track, and that's where I started to do little airs.

What was the thing that kept you coming back to the park?

It was definitely the air. The floatiness, having that air sense. Knowing when to land, where the front and back wheel are the whole time, and knowing that I was in control at that point in time.

Who else was part of that scene that you looked up to or rode with?

The only guy I knew who turned into somebody famous was Bob Morales, and he was riding with Bob Haro. I didn't know anybody else. I just rode. Then the magazines came out that said "Who's better, Watson or Fiola?" I had no idea who Jeff Watson even was. And then it was Fred Becker, and then Steve Bennett.

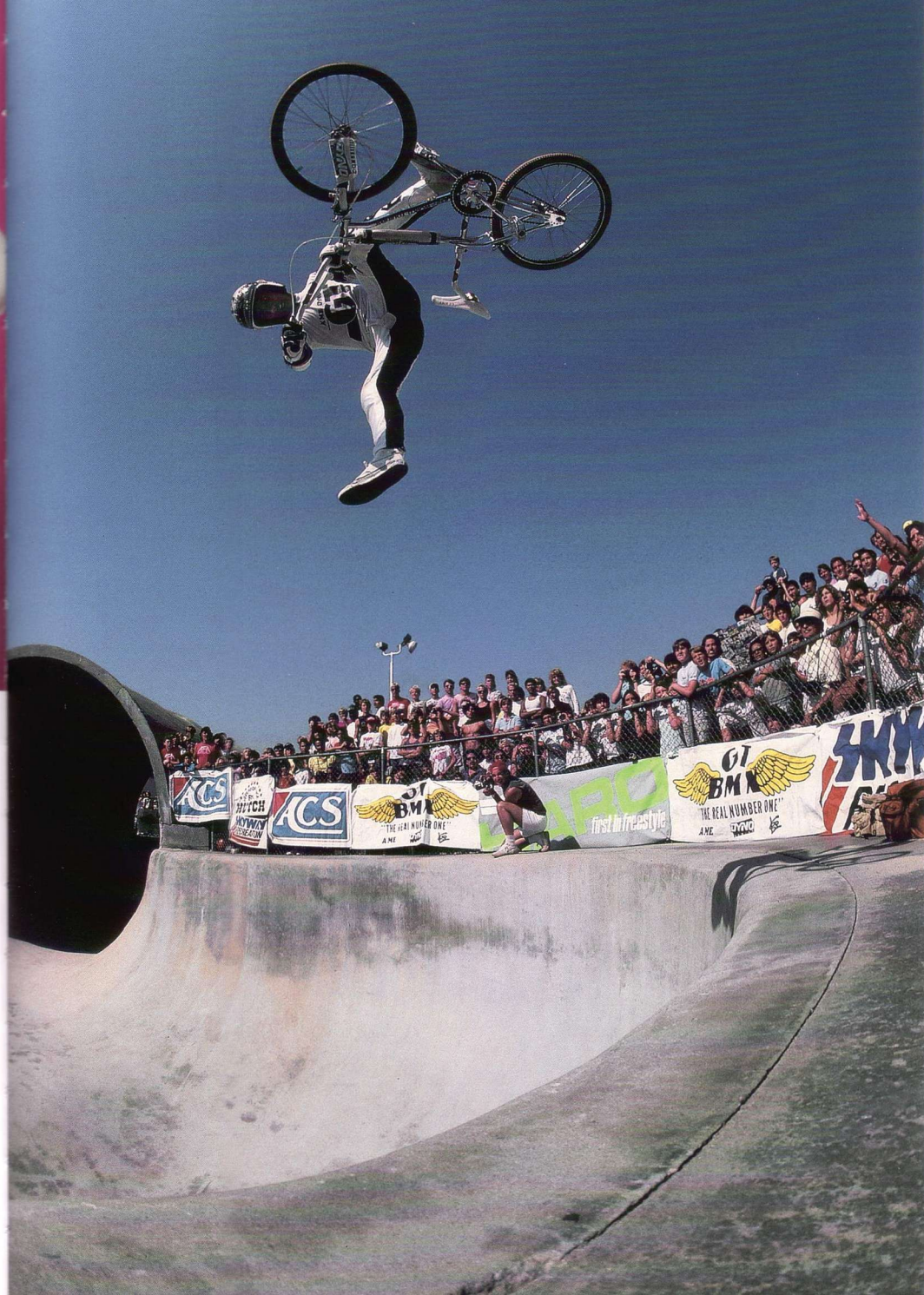
How were you affected by the skatepark closures that started in that era?

Skateboarding was kind of dying out, so that's when the skateparks started allowing bicycles, and it saved their butt for a little while. Bicycles started coming in and paying the fees to ride. I was there every day, riding at least one of the pools.

Did you ever climb fences to poach parks, or crash backyard pools?

I didn't do that at Lakewood until it started closing down. I never dodged any police or security guards or anything like that, but I remember going in with some friends who weren't BMX riders. They brought in their beach cruisers, and it was starting to sprinkle. One of these guys wanted to roll in on his cruiser and there was a little bit of water at the bottom of the pool. He rolled in face first, hands

NORA Cup winner with a gleam in his eye. (right) Screaming out of Upland's Big Bowl with 1 3/8th inch wheels. (spread) Mid-air boning to keep from clipping pool coping on re-entry. The energy level in this shot is so good. Loud and crowded.



"IT'S NOT HOW HARD THE
TRICKS ARE, IT'S WHAT YOU
MAKE THEM LOOK LIKE."



up, broke both his arms in the bottom of the pool. I had to try to help this guy out of a wet swimming pool, out of a key hole, without using his arms. And we're not supposed to be there. I was 15, 16, something like that.

How about the first time you rode wood?

The first time I rode a quarterpipe was probably at one of the BMX functions. The Mountain Dew team was there, the SE team was there, Perry Kramer was there. I wanted to ride their quarterpipe. It was the first one I'd ridden that wasn't mine, so to feel somebody else's quarterpipe was definitely different. It was a little under vert, a little over five-foot wide. Two-by-four transitions.

When did you start to feel like freestyle could become something bigger?

The first person I ever rode for was Gale Webb. I went on a small tour to San Francisco with her, and that's where I met Fred Blood and Mike Smith. This was the first plexiglass halfpipe I rode. Fred and Mike were both into the punk scene, so they were both spitting on each other, I remember that vividly. They would spit up into the air and the other one would catch it. Doing those shows was fun. I got paid 25 bucks a day and all the food I could eat.

Did kids in school know you were a good bike rider and doing tours?

I was pretty much a loner. I hung around with a couple other guys who rode bikes, they were younger than I was. I didn't get my license until after I got out of high school. I rode my bike everywhere, so it wasn't like I was taking anybody to prom or anything. I just went to school because I had to.

What was the first free bike part you ever got?

A pair of forks from Jeff Bottema. Normally it would've drained my full bank account of 25 bucks. The first bike I got for free was a Torker. I had to strip my old bike. They only gave me a frame, and I put my Bottema forks on it. Oh, and I also got an SE Quadangle.

You got a photo in the mag on that Quad didn't you?

Yes I did. As a matter of fact, that was my first photo in *BMX Action* magazine. I was wearing jeans and had a number plate 287. That was one of the only days I wasn't planning on riding the skatepark, I was just going to hang out. Then I saw Oz there with Timmy Judge, and they're at my park! These guys never show up there, and this is the first time ever I don't show up with my bike. And I'm begging and pleading with Oz to stick around while I go get my bike. I ran home seven miles and rode back. He was packing up his stuff. I'm pleading with him, "Hey, come on, watch one run." He came out and watched one run and took photos.

How high were you going?

I don't remember the height, but it felt bigger than anybody else that was there. I remember watching Timmy ride, and I think it was bigger than he was going. That was one of the reasons that I had to show Oz.

And how did your life change after that photo got published?

People knew who I was in school. I brought the magazine everywhere, and would go, "Hey, I'm this, I'm that." I'd go into bike shops that had no idea who I was and buy their magazines, and then they figured out who I was. I was still just a kid.

When did you get on GT?

Back in 1984. Prior to GT I was riding for Everything Bicycles, which was Kuwahara. I did a tour in Japan promoting *ET*, then when I came back I started to ride with Bob Morales more. Bob had an in with GT, and he was the man that pretty much set all the sponsorship up. He organized everything, he was the money man. I never met them by myself, it was always with Bob. I didn't know what I needed or what to ask for, I just rode a bike and had fun. Checks would show up in the mail and I didn't have to work. That made it easy to focus on riding. I don't think I ever worked a normal job in my life except for two weeks.

What did you do for those two weeks?

I stocked nuts and bolts at Home Depot. My mom worked for a nut and bolt factory.

Let's back up a second. You said you went to Japan to promote the *ET* movie release. What was that about, how old were you?

I was 17 or 18, because I still didn't have a license. First time out the country. We rode a little metal quarterpipe that was six feet tall, five feet wide, on top of buildings. This thing would break down into little sections, and we'd have to ride on rooftops of these 15 or 20 story buildings. Hundreds of

people would show up. Nobody'd ever seen the stuff that we were doing before, so it went well. We gave away little *ET* dolls and promoted the movie.

When did you realize freestyle had the potential to be a dominant force in your life?

I guess when the checks started rolling in. I don't think I ever thought about it not being a sport or being a sport. I just got to ride. I didn't think of anybody else doing it other than myself and a couple other guys, and we were showing everybody what you could do on a bike. Back in the day, you'd do kickturn ramps, flatland, pools. And that was freestyle. If you didn't ride everything, you weren't really doing freestyle.

What was the first weird interpretation of freestyle you encountered?

Mike Dominguez and I went to Europe to compete and they had a back wheel hopping contest and a front wheel hopping contest. It wasn't how many, it was actually through cones, and it was timed. So yeah. They definitely were not as informed as we were in California about the sport. I think there're a couple videos of us doing that on YouTube or something.

Mike Dominguez. He always seemed like he was one of your biggest rivals.

Um, rival in competition, but still a friend. I used to hang out at his house and drive him to the skatepark. His dad used to come pick us up and drive us to the skatepark. We were friends before we were competitors.

What kind of situation would you consider high pressure?

The pressure started when the big air contests started happening. That was the only time that I felt any stress or that I had to compete a certain way in order to win. But contests were like a big family reunion, you got to see everybody, talk to everyone. It was just a good day.

Did you ever get into riding street?

I didn't. Something about it, this is me personally, but I don't like to destroy other people's property. And grinding on a handrail or a bus bench, it just wasn't me. I couldn't see myself doing it.

Was it intimidating to go out with Windy, the documenter of the sport, and have Oz, her dad, right there?

Every time with Oz was an awkward moment. He's got this intelligence that makes you feel like, "I have no idea what to say to him," all the time. If you find a subject that he likes to talk about, he'll go on for hours. I can't remember anything bad, other than me crashing into Oz's Porsche with my bike.

What happened?

Oz had taken off to a race somewhere, and Windy and I were inside at the publication. She was working and I was learning quick spins. And quick spins are easier on a nice smooth surface, so I'm inside in the warehouse, and Oz's Porsche is sitting off to the side. I lost my grip and my bike flew right into the trunk of the car. Broke his tail light, and I shit a brick. I was able to fix it, he never knew a thing until I told him at that last reunion we went to. He had no idea. He laughed about it.

How did you learn new stuff and mentally prepare for that?

I would think about the trick, dream about the trick at night, and not necessarily do the trick that I was attempting until the day of the competition. Then, it's the last trick of the competition, so if I fall, no big deal, because it's the last one. I'll try it. Later on in my career, hard knee pads definitely helped. It used to be, you did the trick wearing pants and if you fell, you'd stick. So, you had to make it. No if ands or buts.

You had an early start in Hollywood by working on *RAD*. What was that experience like?

It was good. Two weeks of filming out in Canada, and it was my first time ever working on a movie to see exactly how everything was filmed. It just gave me a wider perspective of what's going on. We helped put together Hell Track.

How did that set you up for your career today?

Everything that I've done in the past has definitely helped where I'm at today. It gave me a spot in the movie and TV business as a stuntman. But it also pigeon-holed me. Everyone thinks that's all I know how to do is ride a bike in the stunt area. I can fall off a bike really good, I've been doing it all my life. But they don't understand that I can also drive cars and ride motorcycles and get beat up, fall down stairs. I like to say stunt guys are like Slinkies, we're no good until we fall down the stairs.

Sum up all the knowledge you have about freestyle in one line.

It's not how hard the tricks are, it's what you make them look like.

We said it then and we'll say it now: Eddie Fiola wasted the rest of the pro class at Del Mar.



// CRAIG GRASSO

Early overall expert threat, grower of dreadlocks, ripper of landscapes, Spot local and Redondo yokel. The Grass Monkey lived the lifestyle of a gypsy, always looking for a new place to ride or another good time. For your enjoyment, a bit of naked conversation with this street pioneer about the ups, the downs, and the sideways places his bike and a lust for life have taken him.

What was your first exposure to the radical side of life?

My step-grandmother was a skateboard mama, so when I was a kid I used to watch her cruise around the skatepark with my cousin. My brothers always skated and surfed. We lived in a beach town so it was inevitable that I would do something kind of crazy.

What was an early spark that got you going in freestyle?

When I think of BMX and what really inspired me to ride, it's that photo of Mike Dominguez on the cover doing that one-hand one-footer out of Del Mar or somewhere...I think it was Whittier, that park. It was a *BMX Action* cover. That particular photo, for some reason, every time I see that I think of it as the motivating factor in my freestyle life. It said it all to me. Like, there's no way somebody's riding a pool and taking one hand and one foot off their bike while they're in the air! That was such an innovation at that time. It was top-notch.

When did the bike industry notice you?

Fred Blood was the person that got my career and my riding noticed. I was hanging out with him and he had some of the connections from rollerskating from back in the day, the punk rock kinda outcast guy. We used to tool around in his little Nissan lowered truck and go up to Angelo's drive-in in Anaheim and shred with Woody Itson and Martin Aparijo and those guys. That was such a cool time, too, because I was so young, you know, just kind of breaking into it, and SE was a big part of that. I was riding for SE when I was at the Venice Beach contest.

What was your golden moment in the sport?

The naked run at the 2-Hip halfpipe contest. That was such a cool thing, it was so spontaneous. It came down to me and Ceppie [Maes] being such homies. He was the one that really threw it over the top for me. It was one of the best moments. Even though it was kind of my downfall at some point, it was positive at the same time and just made me push on and not give a shit what everybody thought. And I think that was where street riding was kind of going at that point. You had to rebel. And that was a big part of it for me.

What was Ceppie's role in that?

Pushing me to be a fucking idiot. Ceppie was like, "Dude, I gotta fix my car, man, I don't know what to do. Just think of something crazy that someone will pay you for." I was like, "I don't know, what do you think?" He was like, "Why don't you ride with your underwear on your head?" I was like, "No, I can't do that." Then he said, "You gotta ride naked man!" And I said, "I'll co it, I don't care. Get 500 bucks for me and I'll do it."

You always had your hustle going. I remember you were one of the first riders making money doing demos out in Vegas at the Splash show. Tell me about that era.

I won the overall in Venice Beach, and that was probably one of my best contests. It threw that desire into me to really be the best, because, you know, you had all the top guys: Mike Dominguez, Eddie Fiola, Donovan Ritter, Brian Blyther...all the big boys were there. It threw me into this realm of wanting to be as good as I could possibly be. Somebody approached me at that contest and said they were from Vegas. I hadn't graduated high school at that time yet and my parents were kind of weary about it, and I was like, "You know what, why don't I take independent study and go and experience it?" I went off to Vegas to be in the show, and it was so cool man. I was like 16 years old, hanging with all kinds of show girls...dude, it was just pimpin'.

I think you were one of the first guys to bring other parts of your creativity, like music, into your riding.

That was such an engrained, branded scenario for me. I had such a double life. I was doing freestyle, but I had this other life that I really enjoyed. And that's why I had the music studio in San Francisco, because that was a dream I had since I was little. I always try to interact, and if I have some talent, use it and do something that I really love.

You, Pete Augustin, Eddie Roman...there are a lot of guys that get credit for pushing street riding, but you were there on the scene and at all those 2-Hip street contests. What do you remember about pushing the boundaries of street riding?

There were places in Redondo and Hermosa Beach, like Larry's Donuts and the wall down on Main Street where R.L. lived, that was the heart of it. You couldn't find any better street riding than San Diego and Los Angeles County, it was all there for you. It was just a matter of opening it up and exposing it. And going for it. It was a one-take. That's how my riding style was. I wasn't the kind of guy that wanted to go down a rail fifteen times. It was like, "Okay, we're here today, you get this on camera and it's done, now move onto the next one." If I pulled it off, that's great.

The riding was awesome, but it seemed there wasn't as much sponsorship around at the time for that.

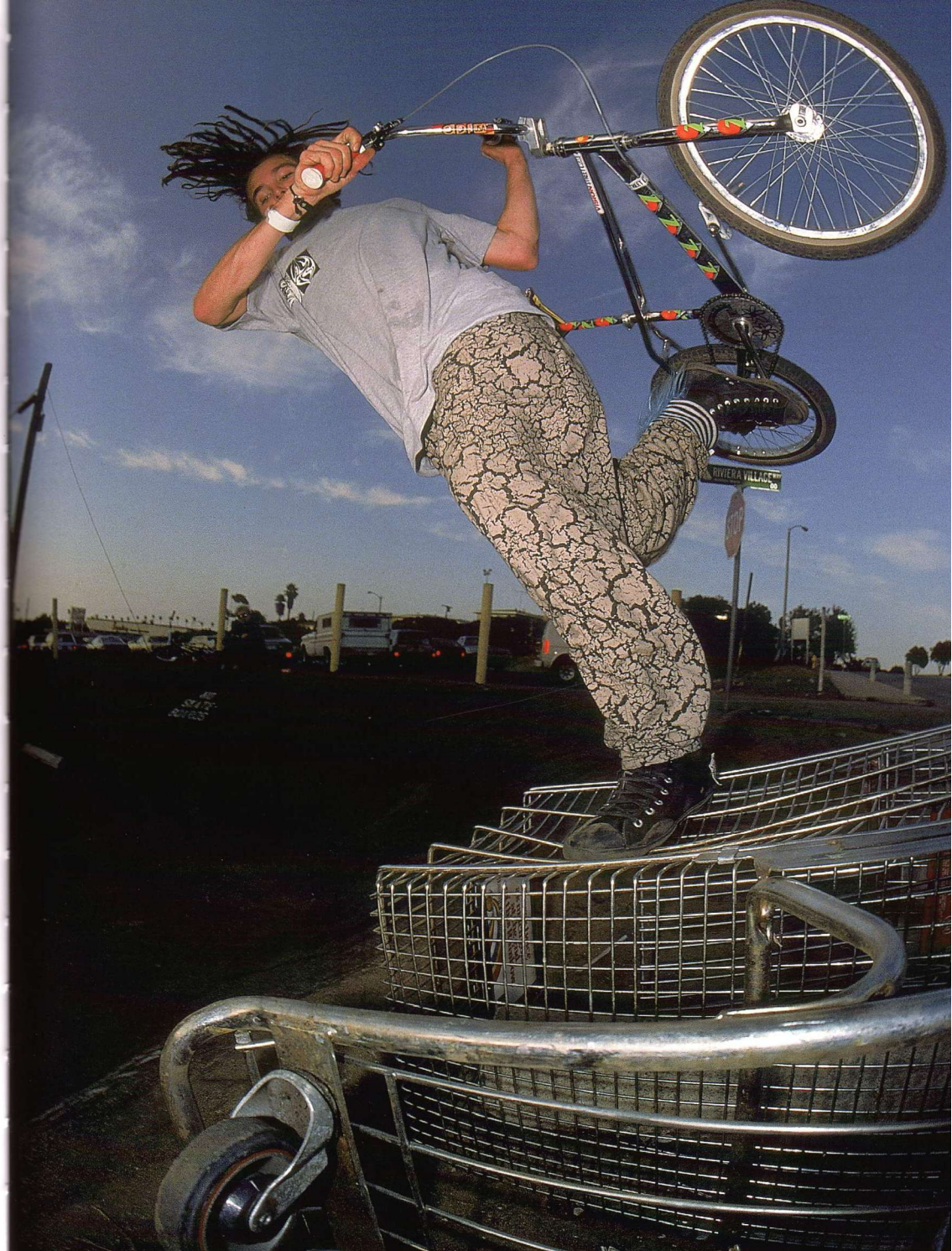
You hit the nail right on the head. That's exactly what was going on. Nobody wanted to sponsor it.



From gothic-to-rasta in just a blink of an eye. (right) Cart bashing with the street trick of the era: backside boneless.

WINDY

JONZE



JONZE

The sport was dying out and people had to take it to the street. I think that's really how street riding evolved. You had a lot of guys who still really loved riding. I think Eddie Roman has to take a lot of credit for that, because he was pushing the videos and pushing people to ride. I didn't even know Eddie very well. I mean, we rode and stuff, but I've never been to the guy's house or nothing. I've always had a blast with the guy—totally innovative, wicked street rider. I think that was really where it came down to the whole "live free" thing, ride to live. Times had to change in order for the sport to mature.

People were trying to reclaim some of the realness.

It's really an addiction. Riding is this hardcore addiction. You give up everything for it. There were times when I would absolutely give up everything just to go ride with like Pete Augustin or somebody, and nothing else mattered. I was getting everything I needed. I had my friends, the adrenaline, wicked support, and just living, you know?

At the magazine, we were all bummed when you left Southern California for San Francisco.

That was probably the biggest regret of my life, moving to San Francisco—even though I had the music studio and that other stuff going on. I abandoned everybody who supported me, anybody who really meant a lot to me. It was like a part of me just left, and it was all because of the girl that I moved up to San Francisco with. I mean, it has nothing to do with her, she's a great person. It's just that influence when you're so young, kind of puppy love and you go head over heels for somebody. Then you realize...it's the experiences that you learn from in life. That one actually hurts me the most, because everything took a different direction. I was still trying to ride and I was part of the messenger scene in San Francisco. Everyone knew me from freestyle, so I still had somewhat of a name, but I was empty, because all my connections were gone. It was the worst decision I ever made.

It seemed like you quickly made a name for yourself in the SF bike messenger culture, and those guys had a lot of respect for you.

Those guys threw a benefit party for me and raised over 5,000 dollars when I got in that trouble with Ron Wilkerson. Remember that? I came back and they had all these flyers all over town. You want to talk about a family that would literally cut their right arm off for you... that's a community that is so tight, so down for the cause. It's unbelievable, the brotherhood involved in that scene. That's something that definitely brought me to a higher level of being totally real with myself and my friends. I think I grew and matured a lot from that scene.

The messenger scene seemed like it was a bicycle job, like working class dudes out there sweating it out climbing hills...

Yeah, it was probably one of the best times in my life as far as riding goes. You want a quick, massive, adrenaline rush? Be a bike messenger in downtown San Francisco. That'll give you respect for life. It's one of those jobs where you could be alive one minute and dead the next. It's just ruthless, dude—to lose your life over a four-dollar tag because you want to get there in a rush.

When did freestyle start to fade for you?

It happened in San Francisco when I started running around doing my own thing and trying to start my own business. I was like, "I gotta stay focused on what I'm doing." But as the days and the weeks and the months went by, I wasn't around people like you, Spike, Andy, Pete, Chris Day, and all those guys. They were my family, my homies. Ceppie actually ended up moving up to the Bay Area and we wound up being pretty good friends for a while. It's strange how it all pans out.

You sent me an email and the subject line was like, "I'm not on crack, I'm not dead, I'm not gay." There were definitely some dark rumors flying around about you. Do you want to talk a little about what you were going through?

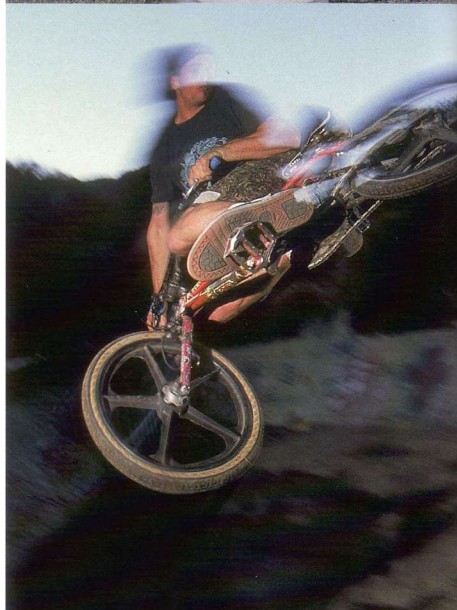
Oh man, just being a complete fucking freak—just fucked up and not giving a shit about anything. After I lost the studio, I lived on the streets, and it was fucked. Got myself all caught up in a dark world, and then got myself out of it.

How low did you go, and how did you come back?

The reality was basically living in a fucking box, if you want to know the truth...living in a box all fucking strung out, just depressed. I got all tweaked out and lost everything. I was swatting imaginary flies with my fucking underwear around my neck. I mean, you know there's a problem when you got your underwear outside your pants and you're walking down the street. People are saying, "Get a job." And I'm like, "How can I get a job when my underpants are outside my pants?"

How did you go from there to where you are today?

I started playing some music with some folks at the studio. I'd lost the studio, but some good friends of mine from San Francisco were like, "Dude, you gotta play the drums, you gotta get yourself out of this." And then I met my wife Christine and she got pregnant, and that was a turning point for me. Once my son was born, it wasn't about me anymore—it was about how to support my son and be the best father I can be. That's when I made the decision to completely change my life. People go through a hard time in their life, and I'm just happy I'm not dead. I'm happy that I've got a beautiful kid, that I've got good people around me, and that's really all it takes.



PETE AUGUSTIN \

We would get new bikes from manufacturers and evaluate them. A lot of it was industry politics: if a brand paid a lot of money in advertising, covering their riders and testing out their products was a way to return the value of their advertising dollars for supporting the magazine. Pete Augustin was our test rider for a time. He was the guy we'd hand a stock bicycle over to and tell him to go off on it, so we could get some action photos. Pete did his job well, and mangled many a bicycle for us in pursuit of awesome images. Then one summer he went on a tour and came back with a shaved head, huge tattoos, and bulging biceps. He looked gnarly. Still a cool guy, but, there was something different about him. And his riding had changed too...or maybe the sport finally caught up with him?

One last issue of *Freestylin'* magazine. What does that make you think of?

Makes me think of how old I am. Makes me think that it's really crazy that this thing that was just a group of friends who rode really hard just for the sake of riding, because there was nothing else in it for us other than riding, and then I started getting some magazine coverage and that was pretty cool. And now today you see guys on X Games and the Dew Tour and they're doing the nuttiest stuff; they're making big money. It's really weird that it's turned into such a huge sport, video games and everything else. It's amazing to me that it's come this far. It's mind-blowing.

What was biggest thing that *Freestylin'* changed for you?

It offered something new, 'cause there was just *BMX Action*, and that was basically a racer magazine. Seeing freestyle coverage was cool because that's what I was into. I was truly always a street rider, never a flatland rider ever.

But you had a lot of tricks and entered a lot of contests as a flatland rider.

I did definitely, but when I started riding bikes I was into dirt jumping and riding to the beach with my friends, and we hit everything and destroyed everything on the way to the beach and back. So when I saw friends like Dave Nourie, Eddie Roman, and others entering the AFA contests and doing well, I figured, "Heck, if they can do it, I definitely can." But I was always just doing 180s and 360s off curbs and bunnyhopping and stuff. Going fast. I wasn't really into flatland. I just did it because that was the only thing that was offered. There were no street contests at the time.

You had good flatland tricks, though.

I don't think my style of flatland was anything like anybody else's, so I wasn't really a flatland rider. There were AFA contests, and you either rode vert or you rode flatland. I was getting there by Redline or by Schwinn or whoever sent me as a flatland rider, so that was the only way I had to be at the bike events, which is where I wanted to be because all my friends were there. But I was really always a street rider, and that's where my roots were. So when I got set up with the AFA contests and everyone was looking like a billboard, I said it to myself, "I'm going to be a biker." And that's when I shaved my head, I stopped wearing the uniforms, I wore jeans; a chain wallet. I wanted to be a biker.

And that influenced a lot of riders at that time. And the sport was changing.

Yeah, definitely. It was changing, but not quickly enough for me. And I couldn't stand it anymore. I liked watching vert, but I couldn't stand the AFA contests anymore, and I knew the sport needed somebody else. I knew that if somebody like Ron Wilkerson would do street contests, it would be something good. So once they started the Meet The Street contests, I knew it was taking off. I saw a whole new vibe going on and it wasn't AFA. I didn't have to wear a uniform, I didn't have to wear pads and a helmet. I didn't have guys telling me, "Hey, if you wear this helmet, you'll get pictures in my magazine, but if you don't you're not going to." I really didn't ride street with a helmet too much, know what I mean?

You cultivated that biker image with the tattoos and just the whole style that was really important to street. You took it seriously.

I definitely took it seriously. I hung out with a lot of skateboarders, and I saw their passion and what they had in skateboarding. It was more of a surfer style. I rode a bike, but I wanted to be able to do the tricks they were doing. I wanted to figure that out. But at the same time, I didn't want to be a surfer

The slave unit flash ignites Pete Augustin in a twilight ditch moment

skater guy. I wanted to be a biker dude. I'm a biker at heart. So it could've been anybody, and everyone has their own different style, but that was my gig. I wanted to do burly tricks, I wanted to push it as far as I could. I wasn't that great of a rider, but I had a lot of passion for bike riding, and I always wanted to try to do different things. I didn't want to do what everybody else was doing.

Have you ever been arrested for riding?

No, but I've been chased by cops lots of times. I got chased by a cop on a horse one time and he wrecked. He bailed the horse. That was probably the scariest chase I had—a damn horse chasing me.

Your friends, like Craig Campbell, Jason Parkes, Chris Day, all those guys had their own unique styles, but it fit that vibe, too.

We all had our own thing going, and our own style. I think not as much tricks, but just the style and attitude that we had. Craig Grasso, a really good friend of mine, definitely had his own style. When he and I rode together it was some of the best times because he got a lot out of me and I got a lot out of him. We used to feed off each other and go on these crazy missions and just try new things. It was before the resi mats and foam pits. It was like, "Is this even possible? Is it possible to do a no-handed wall ride? Can we do that?" Now you know. Now when you get into bikes you know that everything is possible—nothing is impossible. When you see a guy doing a no-handed front flip over a 50-foot jump, you say, "Anything's possible now."

What amazes you about that era?

I'm amazed when anybody walks up to me and knows who I am. And I'm kind of beside myself sometimes if I see guys like Bob Haro or Andy Paterson, those caliber of guys. I'm like a little kid because that's who I looked up to when I was younger.

And how does your past affect who you are today?

Well, today I'm a machinist. I do aerospace programming. I'm almost a completely different person. I'm stable, I'm married, I got a boy on the way. I don't live in a house with five other guys up all night doing crazy stuff. Looking back on who I was, I hope there's not too many people too pissed off at me for the foolish things I did when I wasn't in my own state of mind. But I have a lot of love for these 20-inch bikes, and it excites me today when I see it on TV or when I'm out at an event. And the bike community is a cool community. I love everybody in the bike community. They're my family, so it'll always be with me 'til the day I die.

Pete. Backwards. Aggro.



// EDDIE ROMAN

About once a year at *Freestylin'*, Eddie Roman would hand us his new business card. He was one of the riders who printed them up. Looking back on them, the set of cards collected over the years marks the different eras of his career. There's the "Strickly Trick Freestyle Team" card, dating back to his earliest days as part of the OG SD freestyle mafia. Another card lists his title as "Eddie Roman, Freestyle Showman." There's the shrill yellow "Cornman Productions" card, denotes Eddie's video career (freestyle videos, by the way). My favorite though, is a crisp white card that simply says "Eddie Roman, Happenin' Dude." Indeed. Here's what the happenin' dude had to say.

What's your perspective on how street riding suddenly took off?

The first time I ever saw anything that could be classified as a street trick was Ron Wilton at Balboa park. He did a bunny hop 180 off a ledge, a Swirling Zagnut. When I saw it I was just mesmerized, like, "What in the world was that?" It wasn't really flatland riding, it wasn't ramp riding, but whatever it is, that's what I wanted to do. It seemed so raw, so cool, to where you'd be riding down the street anywhere and see some part of the landscape to do something rad. That was probably the best part of riding, going down the street trying not to get hit by cars. Then the magazines began giving it attention. That definitely gave it momentum because it was like, "Okay this is officially legit now because it's in a magazine, so I'm going to try and do more of it."

You got a lot of coverage doing street.

I was happy to be getting a lot of coverage, and I guess my value went up being known as one of the original guys who invented street or whatever. I think a lot of it had to do with the economy. All the sudden all the big sponsors were dropping their teams, kind of pulling out and basically not really caring as much any more. When the whole dream of being a sponsored rider started dying, I really didn't care any more about sponsors or anything except loving to ride my bike and being creative. It's not something I thought about at the time, but I took all the skills I had on a bike and that's what started to come out.

Do you remember people would grit their teeth when they got street photos taken?

There was definitely that aspect to it where the term "street" conveyed this kind of aggressive or mean or hardcore image. There were some guys who would put on an act. Like, "Okay, we're at a freestyle comp, we need to be tame." Then, "We're in the street, we need to be tough." And it's funny because riders would always think people were castigating them because they were riding their bike, but it usually had nothing to do with that. It was more a matter of breaking the law, property damage, or something like that. So eventually there was kind of a rebellion associated with street riding.

Did you get swept up in it?

Life's A Beach put me, Pete Augustin, and Brian Blyther in an ad and they titled it Pussy Posse. We're supposed to be this renegade group of sexual deviants, and it had nothing to do with who we really were.

Did you have a peak moment in street?

I think it would be the first wall ride photo I got in *Freestylin'*.

What's the story behind that?

I was over in London at the Holeshot event and met a guy named Nick Philip. He was this street rider guy, not really sponsored. He had this little T-shirt company called Anarchic Adjustment and he was just hanging out. It was myself and Dennis McCoy, and I think Dino Deluca. Nick starts doing wall rides in this hallway, and this is the first ever wall ride anyone's ever seen on a bike, tapping the wall and leaving little scuff marks. And it was cool. By the end of the night we're all doing it. I got back to America, and someone calls me — maybe it was you — and says, "Hey I heard you're doing wall rides, we want to take pictures." I come up to Torrance. I get there, and you guys have a bank-to-wall, like, "Here's where we want you to do it." No one had ever done a bank-to-wall before. No one had even thought of that. A wall ride wasn't a bank-to-wall; it was just bunny hopping and tapping tires against the wall. And I'm thinking, "I gotta do this right now, there's no way I can't do this right now because I gotta get the photo and get in the magazine." It's funny, in that picture I have kneepads on because I really thought I was going to crash. I pulled it off and got in the magazine. As far as I remember, that was the first bank-to-wall anyone had ever done. There's not a whole lot of things for a teenage boy to do to define your manhood. In Africa, they all go on a hunt, or other places they all get some scar to prove they're a man. In America there's really nothing like that, except maybe turning 18 and doing something at night, or maybe getting married. But for me, that was basically the conquest of my official manhood; I did this challenge and it turned out good and life is now going to get better. I think that's why action sports have taken off so much, because that's one of the places where that happens. That's where a lot of kids find they're able to prove themselves to themselves. And it still has so much power, just being able to do a trick.



COURTESY OF EDDIE ROMAN



(top) Eddie with his legendary impersonation of William Shatner's cousin, Larry. (above) A carloada trouble. Eddie, stuffed somewhere in the back seat. (right) Eucalyptus fakie. The coverline says it all.

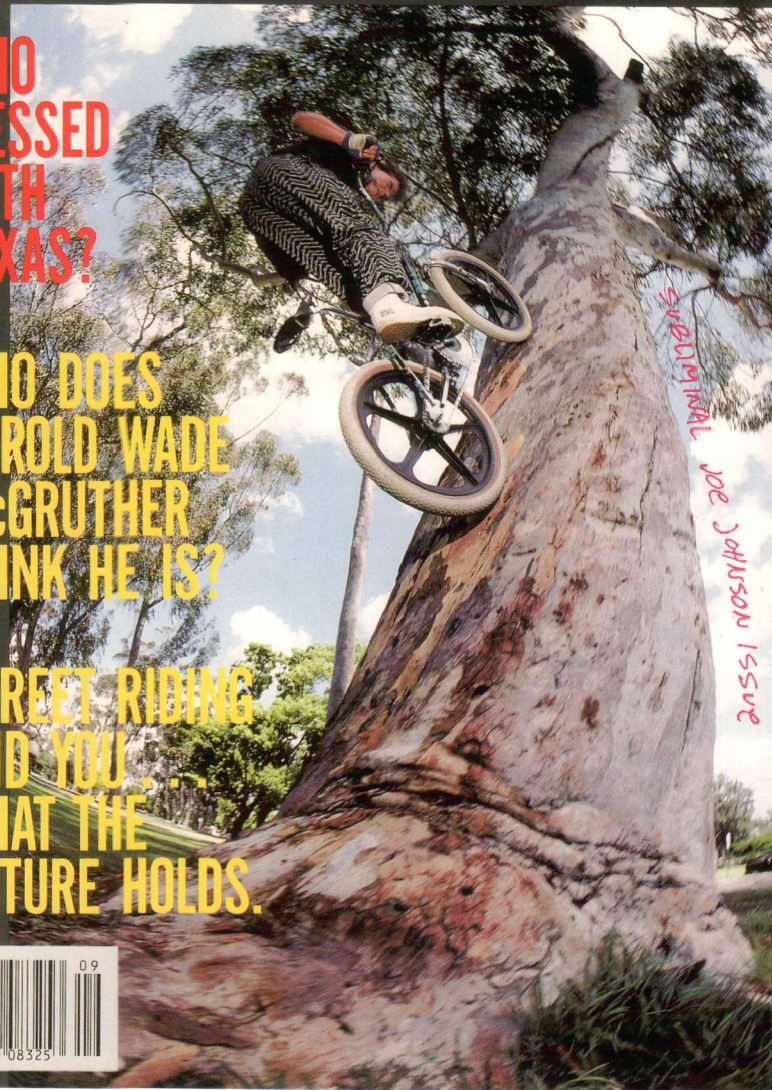
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WHO MESSED WITH TEXAS?

WHO DOES HAROLD WADE McGRUTHER THINK HE IS?

STREET RIDING AND YOU ... WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS.



// DAVE VOELKER

He stormed onto the scene in 1986, riding to AC/DC, blasting 10 feet out of AFA quarterpipes at a time when few could hit those high notes. This is the story of Dave Voelker, a lifelong fisherman who happens to be hooked on freestyle.

What was your incentive to start riding?

I was always the Evel Knievel of the neighborhood. I was the kid that the older guys talked into jumping over trash cans and stuff, and it made me feel good that I could make them happy with my craziness. They challenged me and I entertained them by pulling off whatever they gave me. And that's what really motivated me: riding wheelies and having someone be really happy about what I was able to do. It made me feel good and it made them feel good.

What kind of bike were you on?

A crazy Schwinn with the butterfly handlebars with the aluminum can in-between the handlebar and the gooseneck so it'd get better grip. I never had any of the top quality bike parts. I was always the one with junk, but of course I'd be doing as much as anybody—if not more. It didn't matter. That's what I try to teach my children, that it doesn't matter if you have the best stuff or whatever, you do what you can do with it.

What's the highlight of your 21-year bicycle career?

Before I even was out of high school, I was down at the Santee lakes all by myself fishing and I heard some kids on the other side of the fence—outside of the lake area that you're allowed to be in—and they were riding some jumps, and they were like, "Hey look, I'm Dave Voelker! Table top!" It made me feel so weird and giddy inside that these kids were pretending to be me just like I was pretending to be Evel Knievel when I was growing up. So ever since then—still to this day—that was the most excitement I've ever felt in my life, that somebody wanted to be me. It's weird that after all that's happened, that's still the number one thing in my head. My own town, just out in the middle of nowhere, hearing that.

How do you get a reaction out of people today?

I've thought about this a lot lately because I've been riding a lot with kids who are much more talented than I am, and I am still able to be the star of the show. I hate to sound like I'm being that way, but I can honestly put my tricks together in a special way to entertain people and that's my talent. That's my superpower. I'm not a super talented rider but I have a way of getting the crowd to react to me. Like, what can I do next to make them yell? I have that gift of being able to make them yell. Now, instead of being able to do a rollback, I do a flip on the ramp to rollback. It's one of my last tricks and it just blows their mind that you are able to do a flip and roll out of it backwards. I was just in Jamaica the other day and still got the giant reaction out of the people there.

Tell us about being brought up under the wing of Brian Scura.

Brian Scura caught wind of me and contacted me. He drove his quarterpipe down to my high school and set up the ramp and he tested me out. He actually gave me an audition. He went back home and decided I was a little too sketchy and tried somebody else or something. Then he called me up and tried me out again—I guess he was desperate—and he realized I could really put it together. He started working with me, having me wear a mask and stuff.

What was up with the skits and all that stuff?

He really had a talent of being entertaining, even though a lot of people thought it was really off the wall, but that's what great artists do. It's usually a little different from most people. And some of the skits were "Let Me See You Shake Your Tail Feathers," and he would ride to that song. It was like, "Whoa, dude." That stuff was heavy. And then he had us wear these George Jetson masks. I would come out from behind the ramp as "Judy Jetson," shaking my butt and that stuff. You had to do a skit and then go back and change real fast into the next mask. It was crazy. And "The Devil Went Down to Georgia." I was the devil and he was the good guy, and if it didn't go right, he'd stop the show and go, "That's not the way it's supposed to go." And he'd redo that part so he could win the battle. It was cool, man. I have one more little thing about Brian. We were in a McDonalds one time and he couldn't make up his mind on what he wanted and he said, "I think I'm going to flip for it," and he did a back flip right there at McDonalds. The cashiers in there just going, "Oh my God, this guy's a trip." But that was just him. Thank you Brian Scura. I would've been at the metal shop welding if it wasn't for him.

How old were you?

I was 19 when he got me started.

What does "Dyno" mean?

Dyno-mite! No, I don't know. It really never meant a whole lot to me, the Dyno end of it, because GT was so strong and Dyno was just kind of our tour team. I always wanted to be the GT part of it, because that's where the top athletes were, so I was always focused on wanting to be on GT. I ended up switching over eventually. I was with GT/Dyno for 15 years and then after that, it wasn't any other paying sponsors. I hate to say it, but I am a "show ho," that's basically what it boiled down to. I've never been into the business side of it. It's just, "Tell me where I go next."

There was a streak of street contests that you consistently won.

Yeah, 2-Hip Meet the Street. Oh, man, what a blessing of timing on that. That's the kind of riding I was doing on my own at the time—riding around neighborhoods and hitting stuff as fast as I could, hitting every object



Tearing a hole through time and space, Dave Voelker manages a momentary advantage over gravity.

JONZE

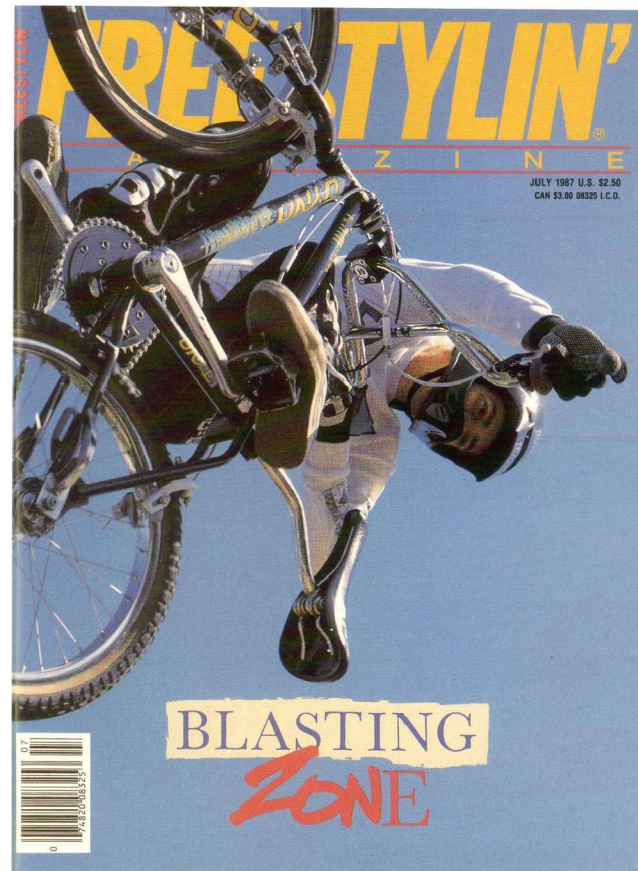
GIBERSON





ADRIAN

JONCE



(far left) Folded in half like a futon mattress, Voelker inverts a footplant.
(left) Nothing beats the feeling of landing your first cover shot. State-of-the-art turnaround aerial announces the arrival of a new star.

possible. And that's basically what the street contests were. I rode on cars. I rode on walls. That's what I was all about. And Ron Wilkerson decided to have a street contest, the first one ever, and in my town, at my favorite dirt jump-to-wallride. And it was on. That's how everyone rode at the time. They didn't have to go out and spend money. And I believe that's where our sport originated. The kids who couldn't afford motorcycles were out pretending to ride motorcycles. And someone like me, I couldn't afford nice clothes and pads and all that stuff. I could go out and ride the street.

You were literally King of Street.

I left 2-Hip Meet the Street undefeated. The sport was in an all-time low. Hardly anybody was sponsored. I was one of the only athletes left making money in the early '90s. And the show thing was just on fire, the GT Bicycles Air Show. We were traveling everywhere consistently. I was able to make a decent salary, and they were working us to death. I was able to survive, because the X Games made our sport so popular that I could make a living doing shows alone. And here I am, ten years later after my first X Games, and I'm still making a living doing shows.

What are your go-to tricks? What tricks have you used the longest and dollar-for-dollar made the most money on?

I used to end every quarterpipe jump box show with 540 to no handed back flip to a flip fakie. I did that combo for ten years straight, and to this day it's still a popular way for me to end the show.

What kind of crowds are you riding for these days?

Entertainment for giant corporations. We're doing a lot of corporate gigs. I'm going to Turkey in two weeks to entertain one of these massive companies where people are behind computers all the time and never get out to see anything, and there we are on a stage riding in front of them. Obviously, the NBA shows are a weird combo, because we'll be riding the elevators with the players in the hotels and things like that. The Grand Ole Opry stage was a very historical, weird-feeling place. That was cool.

How has touring the world changed you?

Everywhere I've traveled, it's all pretty much the same. People are the same whether they're rich or poor. We all have the same problems. I've learned a lot from it, so I believe knowing that has made me a better person by far. And I teach my children that, that nobody's better than anyone else.

// BRIAN BLYTHER

Growing up in the blasting zone of Pipeline, Brian wrote the book of style and defied the laws of gravity. Today he carries a ticket book, wears a different kind of uniform, and upholds a different set of laws.

Do you remember your first day at a skatepark?

My first cement was the Baldy fullpipe. I went there when I was real young with my brother. And later, we used to sneak into a place called Pomona Pipe and Pool. It was a skatepark that closed down and it'd been abandoned for about two years. I got to ride it maybe four or five times before they closed it. It had a big long halfpipe similar to Del Mar's, and I remember being so stoked, just carving around, having a good time. That was right around the time when quarterpipes were popping up in the neighborhood.

What were you like as a teenager?

I was real mellow and probably a little naïve to some of the things I see kids doing these days. I was somewhat into girls but not really. I was pretty focused on riding because I was just starting to get a taste of it. I went on my first Vans tour the summer after eighth grade with Woody [Itson], Mike [Dominguez] and Everett [Rosecrans], and our chaperone was like 20 years old. It was a summer where you could just be yourself and do whatever.

What did you think was cool about freestyle right when you first started riding?

I was always really into jumping. For some reason I was drawn to ramps, and there were a couple quarterpipes and little shitty halfpipes that the skaters had. Nobody ever rode bikes on any of the stuff—even the Baldy pipes. I thought that was kind of neat, that I was the only one who did it. They were all really cool to me and treated me good, helping me keep it up and progress.

How did you end up on Huffy?

I rode Pipeline and entered a couple contests. Bob Hadley was sponsoring Gary Hasselhorst at the time, who was a freestyler. Well, he was a racer that turned to freestyle in '83. They were looking for somebody to do shows with Gary, and I was one of the local rippers. They just approached me. I never considered considered Huffy's good bikes, really, but it was a huge, huge experience to ride for them. Stu Thomsen got hired about the same time I did. I was in the eighth grade and flying to Dayton, Ohio, two to three weekends a month to do shows. It was pretty fun.

What were those shows like back in the early days?

Oh, they were pretty much kickturn ramps and an occasional quarterpipe. Real, real old school—rock walks and 360s. I was always good at those and that was kind of enough to get you by. We had cool uniforms. I never actually rode a Huffy, but our bikes were dialed. I couldn't imagine seeing a video of one of our shows now. It would probably crack me up.

You were the first guy to get photos in the mag doing a tail whip. That was pretty rad. I don't know if a lot of people know that today. That was your creation, right?

I wasn't an inventive guy. I didn't care about that. I mean, there were a few things I liked doing. Like, 360s were awesome. I learned 360s out of ditches. But early on I was really into curb endos. I was trying to touch my butt on my tire, and me and buddy would play Buff and RL, and if I went too far over on a curb, I would lift my leg up and my bike would spin around and hit the sidewalk before I flipped over the handlebars. I did that a thousand times, and pretty soon we started doing curb endos with our foot on the tire, and the same thing would happen. Then I realized that if I leaned back and did that, it would come all the way around. I think the day I even thought about it, I pulled it off, and then I couldn't pull it off once out of every ten times after that. But the very first day when it popped into my head to lean back, it happened, and it was just crazy. I never thought it would end up being that kind of trick. I should've named it the Blyther. Actually, I don't think I ever named it, I think the magazine did.

What was the number one thing that contributed to your success as a rider?

Over the years people say that I had "Blyther style" or whatever. When I was riding ramps or at a skatepark, it had nothing to do with style or me trying to land smooth. That was just the way you rode—you pump your tires up as hard as you can, you land smooth, and then you go high. In the skatepark, it just helps you flow a lot more. You do high airs and stay smooth, and you can keep your speed up. All I cared about was going high. Variations weren't really my thing. I had to learn them for contests and it was fun to learn them, but I wasn't one of those riders who had to progress, which is sad to say. Most of the people I rode with always had to progress—had to always learn tricks. I pretty much just had to flow and do high airs and I was happy. I never really expected to win contests. I never expected to try my hardest to compete and beat people and be real aggressive and competitive. It was just something that happened if I rode smooth and had fun.

What was the gnarliest thing on the sketchiest bike that you ever did?

To me, riding someone else's bike is like wearing someone else's shoes that are three sizes too small. I never really could do that. I'm sure I've probably done it at some time, but I wasn't so competitive. If my bike broke, I'd pretty much think that I was done. A lot of people can get back up and still do really good, but if I fell, I was done. I can't get up and I'm not going to try to finish my run. I'd hold



A garage full of toys paid for by arials.

(right) Holy tuck. Airing out the laundry for a San Diego show crowd.

(following spread) Goof session on a backyard mini deluxe. Carving around the spine sounds like something a butcher would do, but that's what he's doing.



JONZE



my hands up, and just be like, "Bummer, I fell."

You never struck me as a guy who got hurt too bad.

I fell at Del Mar at the end of the halfpipe where it went kind of under vert. I dropped in going mach-five and went to do an alley oop. I ended up hanging up and going down to the bottom and breaking both bones in my wrist. That sucked. I remember doing a photo session with John Ker one day, and, you know, "Higher! Higher! Higher!" I remember doing fifty takes, until I ended up falling and breaking my collarbone.

Did you get much into street riding?

Like I said, I always liked to land smooth — I wasn't someone that could just launch off a box and land flat. I mean, I could do it but it didn't really interest me. It wasn't much fun. I liked transition a lot more.

When did freestyle seem like it was legit and could actually be a career for you?

Well, in the early days, I never even considered it, to be honest. I was getting paid 350 bucks a month when I got hired by Huffy going into ninth grade. I remember having money, and not having to get lunch money from my parents. I remember me and Dominguez bought these little scooters and we'd ride down to the beach. At that time, I was going, "This is pretty cool," but I never considered it a career until I got onto Haro, and even then, in the back of my head, I knew it was not going to last forever. I remembered in the early days seeing Brian Scura and some of the older riders at the time. I remember being a kid when Brian was like 21 and thinking, "Man, if I'm ever riding a bike when I'm that guy's age, somebody better shoot me." I had that mentality when I was young. And then next thing I know, it just never ended.

Let's talk about the Haro era for a second. That's one of the defining teams of freestyle: You, Wilkerson and Nourie.

I hear Ron say it all the time, to this day. You travel with someone seven months out of the year and it's almost like a marriage. It was pretty intense. I was the mellow, smooth guy, and Ron was the nut that would just learn tricks in the middle of shows, and Dave was kind of like our tour mom, and that combination was just unbelievable. Ron had the real powerful, aggressive drive, but me and Dave were just having a good time. It happened so fast, but I've got so many great memories. It was a lot of fun.

I remember Ron was the guy focused on being professional. He was always like, "Come on you guys, put on socks when you're doing these shows! You can't just have shoes and no socks. You gotta look like a pro."

Well, Ron...you gotta understand there's a night and day difference between "1985 Ron" and whenever his slam was. I mean, knowing Ron today, I forget about how he was. He was a hardcore Mormon, married with children, and this was his profession. It meant everything to him. I loved it, but if it all ended tomorrow, I was okay with it. But Ron was focused, like, "This is it..." It was his career. It was cool. I always felt a little weird that I wasn't like that. I think me and Dominguez had pretty similar attitudes on the outcome of bike riding. But yeah, Ron was hardcore Mormon when we first started touring, and me and Dave Nourie would drink wine coolers, hang out with girls, and do silly stuff. I remember that if Ron ever caught us drinking the wine coolers he would literally cry and be upset for days.

He lived such a straight-edge lifestyle, but he would ride a lot harder and stir up more trouble.

Exactly, once he learned that everybody was drinking and smoking pot and doing their own thing. By the time '87 came around, Ron was designated driver and he was acting more drunk than everybody. In the early days, that's what people did at contests. We'd just get together and drink and hang out, and Ron was always driving. We'd get in the van and he'd drive crazy. He'd always stir more stuff up than anyone else that was actually partying. He was like that forever — he was the guy at the hotel jumping from the fourth story into the pool, or walking out of a seven-story window to another room. He was always doing stuff like that, crazier than everyone else.

I forgot about that time he rolled that rental van.

Yeah, there're 15 people in a van and everybody's drinking and having a good time, and sober Ron does an e-brake slide on the freeway getting off the off-ramp and ends up rolling the van and sliding upside-down for half a block coming up to the intersection. That was in Alabama if I remember right, and there was a giant tool box in the back. It could've been really bad, but nobody got hurt. I think I got hurt the worst — I was peeing blood for a couple days.

What was the most shocking thing you ever saw someone do on a bicycle?

The first time I saw someone bunnyhop off a curb, it was mind-blowing. The first time I saw somebody do a little wallride it was mind-blowing — kind of the whole progression of the sport has been mind-blowing. I think the most amazing trick I ever saw came way later: Jay Miron did a 540 tailwhip. I mean, 540s — I remember when we were doing them halfway up a ramp and landing on our back tire, and I remember tailwhips, but that trick just seemed so burly and so impossible. He pulled it off at the X Games — I don't remember what year — but that blew me away. The first time I saw Joe Johnson do a tailwhip air. I used to trip out on Mike pulling off four-foot fakies. Wilkerson, he and I were so opposite in riding style. I wouldn't try anything I couldn't do. I wouldn't start a show and think about how I want to try this or that today, and he was so about that. Whatever he wanted to learn, he would just try it. He was always pushing it. It got to a point by the time '87 came around where it was scary to do shows with him. There were times when I would almost beg to go under him on double airs, because if I went over him I would have to do a nine- or ten-foot air just to get over



"...GO HIGH AND SMOOTH
AND CARVE AROUND, JUST
HAVING A GOOD TIME, THAT
JUST DOESN'T FLY ANYMORE,
UNFORTUNATELY."

(left) *Gallus gallus* is the scientific name for a chicken. There is no scientific name for a chicken air. Here's what a perfectly cooked one looks like.

GIBSON



JONZ

him. He'd be cranking so fast right next to me and be yelling as we went across the ramp, and I was like, "Holy shit!" Numerous times we hit in the air and fell, and it sucked. There were times when we did the air over 540 and I hung up my front wheel or my tire slid out, and he'd come down from doing an air and hit my bike and flip over and eat shit. That kind of stuff would hair me out. The next time I'd do a double air after we crashed, I'm shitting my pants as I'm going towards the ramp. We were just different. But it made for fun shows I guess.

What were people usually surprised by when they met you?

That we'd go to kids' houses, or have a BBQ at the bike shop owner's house and ride their local ramp. We lived for that kind of stuff. It sounds a little weird to me now, but we'd actually stay with people we met. We'd rather stay the night with people we met and drive all day the next day than stay in a hotel. Or drive there and sleep all day and then do shows. That was something that Ron was really into, and me and Dave also liked it. I remember people saying they never thought we would do it. We made friends with a lot of people, and we did the same with shops. I think that was probably the biggest thing that helped Haro—hanging out with shops.

What are some of the best shops with the best scenes in your memory?

By far, Rockville. And there were a couple shops in Ohio that were good. Sundance Cycles in Chicago—that was always a really fun show.

You were part of the Swatch Impact tour. That was stepping it up a bit in terms of shows, right?

Those were obviously big shows. Even when we were on Haro, we did some shows and concerts. We did Crystal Gayle and Three Dog Night and the Haro team, and we all performed on the same stage in like '86 or '87 in Kingsport, Tennessee, and there were probably, God, I don't know how many thousands of people. Thousands and thousands. An unbelievable amount of people. And we did that a couple years in a row. The Swatch Tour was real similar. The thing that was weird for us at the Swatch Tour wasn't the people, because at that time freestyle was big. We would pull up to shops and there'd be hundreds of kids and big huge jam circles. But the weird thing about the Swatch Tour is that we'd pull up in tour buses and we'd have catered backstage areas at these arenas. That was kind of weird. We all had our own bedrooms on the bus. Leather jackets. It didn't matter what you wanted. If it was legal or illegal, they pretty much would supply any request you had. It felt really rock star. As a matter of fact, the bus we had was Guns N' Roses' tour bus. Every flat surface in it was mirrored.

What were some of the things you thought were corny in freestyle?

One of my best friends, [Dave] Voelker, was doing a show with Brian Scura, and they were doing a skit. The whole show was a magic show and they had pyrotechnics. I remember feeling sorry for Voelker and thinking it was all so fruity, but he was such a rad rider that it was kind of okay—it made it tolerable. Some of the ads, like the [Mike] Dominguez and Woody [Itson] ad where they're on the beach leaning on their bikes. All that stuff really did seem corny to me. But unfortunately I was caught up in it, and ads were like that. I was lucky enough to have fairly cool sponsors like Airwalk and Life's a Beach.

What did you spend your money on?

I wasted a ton of money on cars instead of buying houses and property. We spent a lot of money on stereo systems. Mike Dominguez was really crafty with building stuff. So we had mini-trucks. He was always welding and cutting the tops off our trucks, and making tilt beds. We did a lot of stuff that you wouldn't normally do to a brand-new truck.

Do you have any memories of Wizard Publications?

Freestylelin' magazine was the biggest thing that changed the sport. It changed my life, getting coverage. I got a lot of love from you guys and I've always appreciated it. I was very, very honored that you guys gave me coverage and let me hang out. It's like we all had the same love and we all ended up in a weird place, but I'm glad I was part of it, and I'm glad I was part of the magazine. There were so many good covers. I always liked that Josh White cover with the little picture—I thought that trick he was doing was sick.

Did it ever start to fade for you, like the magic was gone?

When Haro was coming to end, it was sad. Six months after you lose a sponsor or after you quit, you ask people and they always say, "Oh, dude, I ride more than ever." And I don't know if everyone just says that because they feel good and want to be riding or what, but I actually toured so much and put so much work into it that for me to actually spend a summer at home was great. I remember not having obligations—just doing shows when I wanted to and actually spending time at home and having a girlfriend, a dog, and just kind of living the life. I mean, I don't think I'd spent a summer at home since I was in the sixth grade. The magic wasn't gone for riding, but I was starting to enjoy just normal living. I used to think that I wanted a normal job, and I used to think, "I can't wait 'til I work every day." So at that point, something was definitely going on in my head.

Do you have any regrets or disappointments?

No, I can't say that I do. I mean, everyone's into riding for their own reasons. I don't know of any top riders that can survive on the attitude that I had, you know? Pretty much just wanting to go high and smooth and carve around, just having a good time. Nobody can make a living doing that anymore. But I never expected to have a career.

Let's talk about your new career.

I'm a police officer. The city I ended up going to work for was Montclair, which is right next to Up



land. My friend Xavier Mendez works for the same city. He had quarterpipes and halfpipes and he was one of my riding friends all through the Pipeline days. One of the Tony Hawk skateparks was built directly next to the Montclair police station—it's only separated by a fence. It's a bitchen skatepark—two ten-foot bowls, a big eight-foot spine. It's just awesome. As soon as I got hired they were on the internet looking at my name, so they asked me if I would bring my bike to the police department because the newspaper wanted to take some pictures with me. I had no clue—I thought we were going to go out in the grass and I was going lean against my bike and they were going to take some pictures. Well, that's exactly what happened, but the newspaper guy said, "Is there anything you can do in the park there?" I said, "Yeah, I'd love to, but they don't allow bikes." He said, "Aw, don't worry about it." It was late May and 85 degrees and I'm in my full uniform with my gun and radio and the whole nine yards. I sessioned it for like 45 minutes, doing six or seven foot airs. It was crazy. Cops were pulling up and my sergeant said, "Brian! What the fuck are you doing in there?" Because I'd just had a briefing and I should be working; I'm brand-new. He was just flabbergasted. He didn't see the captain there. I explained it to him and he was just in shock. Some skater happened to show up and I asked him if I could borrow his helmet. I did three more airs after that and a pretty nice invert, and I didn't think anything of it. I thought there'd be a little picture on the back of the paper and a quick interview. And the next week, it was front page on the Friday paper. All it said was: "High Flying Cop," and the whole left side of the front page was an article. I immediately just sunk when I saw it. I mean, I'd been a cop for like three minutes and I'm already on the front page of the paper. That's the last thing you want to do when you're a cop anyway, is let everybody know who you are and everything about you. So I was worried but I got over it in about a day. Well, that day, from seven in the morning until about noon, there were 57 complaints by citizens: bike in the park, not wearing pads, blah-blah-blah. The mayor got bombarded with complaints, letters, and phone calls, and it turned into a big issue. And I don't session there in a uniform anymore.

How does being a cop compare to the rush of riding a bike?

That's totally different to me. I don't think I get that big of a rush riding, because it's controlled. At work, it's semi-uncontrolled and you don't know what's going to happen. But it is a huge adrenaline rush and it's a lot of fun. Sometimes you see that little puff of smoke out of the exhaust pipe and your heart just drops and you're in pursuit. It's just fun to blow people away by not being the typical cop. It's a lot of fun and it's been a good gig for me.

And do you have a mustache?

No, I don't rock the mustache.

2,000 people clapping 4,000 hands make a lot of noise. Brian Blyther knows that sound well. Looks like Rockville, summer of 1987.



// MIKE DOMINGUEZ

The rumors were part of Mike's aura: He was practically blind. He would keep his bike in the airline box between contests, never putting it together. He was landing 900s in his backyard. He'd signed some huge contract with Diamondback (later, a Porsche to confirm it). He had no fear. He had no drive. He had pure ability. He'd rolled in on a finger-tight bike wearing flip-flops with no helmet, booming 10 feet out like it was nothing. And that was the bottom line: no matter what you believed or heard or suspected about Mike Dominguez, the air always had the last word.

First day on a bike in a skatepark. What happened?

The big thing was hitting tile on your skateboard. My buddy got in the bowl in Skate City on his bike and hit tile first time. It was a good friend of mine, Derek Johnson. I tried his bike real quick, and I got tile right away. It was like, "Wow, this is cool. This is it."

What age were you?

Right about 11. It took me about one year until I was in the magazine and sponsored and doing shows. I got to experience Pipeline, Skate City, Del Mar. Skate City went out before Del Mar. That was before I really had a huge name. Actually, that's when I did the photo session with Bob [Osborn]. When I got my cover, Skate City was shut down. I was in there shoveling out dirt and using water pumps to pump out the pools. It was a real bummer, I remember going, "Shit, I wish I could buy this place." I was 12 years old.

What did you think was cool about freestyle? What attracted you to it?

It was all unknown. People hadn't done many things, really just airs, not huge canyons, not "Hey, can I fly out and do a 360 and land on the other side of that gap?" For bikes, it was really, really new. Skateboards were a little bit more advanced, but shit, the big things were hand plants. It was all new.

Then the tricks got better, but the parks started closing.

Yeah, skateparks dying out sucked. It really put a damper on my lifestyle. Pipeline, you know. For a while there I lived with Brian Blyther.

How old were you?

I bet 15.

What would you guys do to push each other?

Screwing around, that's it. There was no pushing. It was all fun.

Let's talk about getting on Haro. You had a bike coming out on Haro. Then it got cancelled.

It came to money, basically. Cut and dry. Bob was a great guy, I couldn't say one bad thing about him actually, but it just came down to money.

Who was advising you on your career at that time?

Me. I did it all. You're talking at 14 or 15 or whatever. It was interesting. I tell my son about it all

*We like the cars, the cars that go boom.
(right) Doing damage at Del Mar circa 85, with
a stretched downside one-hander one-footer.*

WINDY





Cracking one out of the park in
a Colorado baseball stadium.

the time, I'm like, "Dude, at your age you'd be on the road, you gotta handle your laundry, your whole life." I started seeing that there was real money to be made. This is serious stuff. Diamondback is where I made some real money. I was like, "We can start buying all kinds of shit." You know, cars, houses. It was tough going to school back then when I was riding and that young. Making too much money, as much as the teachers. It was like, "Who the fuck are you to tell me anything?"

Did your riding pick up as a result of skipping school?

Probably not. It just stayed steady. I don't think it increased any more or less. I think it would've been hindered had I stayed in school, absolutely. It would've definitely held me back from riding. So really I stopped going to high school about six months into it and that was it. I tell everybody I graduated on the road.

What kind of lessons did you learn in that school?

How to live, that's probably one of the biggest lessons. How to mingle, how to associate, how to relate to people business-wise. I had heated debates on salaries. I can remember one with Diamondback with me yelling, and them yelling, "Fuck, we can't pay you!" Yelling, smoke coming out of their ears, and me saying, "Fuck, I'm out of here, I want more."

Did it work?

Yeah, it did. And honestly I was an arrogant asshole at the time. It was what it was. I was the best. I was pretty much damn near untouchable at the time, and it was like, "If you want me, this is what I need." I held them over the barrel, and they fucked me over at the end too. They booted me off the team at a bad point, but what goes around comes around. What it taught me was life. It seemed like it went by in a blur.

Did flatland have any influence on your vert riding?

Absolutely. The tailwhip was just on ground, and I remember constantly screwing up on a flyout on a corner of the combi pool, and my bike always wanted to whip out from under me, and that's how that trick came around. That's how it got started. I was like, "Huh, this might actually go all the way around, why not land it?" That was it.

What else did you come up with or innovate on?

Can-cans, no-footed can-cans.

Let's talk about nines. That was one of those tricks that everybody was waiting to see.

I started working on 720s. I was starting to try 'em a couple feet out and thinking, "Hey, how do I stop my rotation from plenty high and come back down backwards?" I started working on those over at Mike Buff's house one time. It was on one of the big days riding and a lot of people would show up, so naturally you're not going out there and practicing new tricks. But after a lot of the guys went home I was trying 720s. Just shortly after that is when I had my ramp in Hacienda Heights. That's when I first started doing 900s. It was a heavy trick. You had to be in the mood to really hurt yourself.

Did you ever wake up in the flatbottom, like, "What just happened?"

No, not on that. I have, though, many times, but on other stuff. Not on that, not waking up. Definitely on the flat bottom, bell rung, just dead.

Would you do it around other people?

I rode alone most of my time, even at skateparks. One time Rich Sigur was over practicing. I did it with him. Everybody tried to push me to do it, but it was just like, "I'll do it when it's time." At the Velodrome, I wish I would've made that one because there's been so much controversy as far as making it, and I never did make it in the contest. What can I say?

At contests, you have to pull something out and deliver it on a platter.

Honestly, it's the crowd that wants to see you do something crazy or eat shit. The best 900 memory was definitely the Velodrome. By no means did I have it dialed in at all. Could I do it, yeah, absolutely. Could I eat shit on it? Definitely. But I remember being tired, and at the end of your runs you're sitting there dying. I couldn't breathe. It's just the way it was, you know. Two and a half minute runs back then. I remember being at the top of one of the quarterpipes at the Velodrome and Frank Scura and Ron Haro were yelling, "Come on, 900! Come on pussy!" I'm sitting on top of the ramp barely breathing, all I have is a few seconds left, and I did it. I think I slipped a grip on that, or a pedal. It was right there. That's really one I wish I would've not been a pussy on and just hung onto. As far as having to pull out something at a contest, that's what it's all about right there. I remember at one of Wilkerson's contests, I was like, "This is a close one, I better pull something out." And this was with no practice, I pulled the one-handed one-footed 540.

You had a reputation for being pretty mysterious.

I was just quiet, I did my own thing. Shy.

But you were legendary for the natural ability. Show up and blast.

I made myself do it every time. You don't need to warm up. It's just like anything else. You'll figure out that transition when you're going up it.

What went through your head when you saw your competition doing new tricks?

That's possible now. Naturally you can do it. That's not the factor. If anybody can do it, you can do it. It's the shit that nobody's done that you better figure out right now, because you're going to learn that, and you're going to have to top that.

What'd you spend your money on?

Cars. Maybe a little bit of dirt bike stuff. I bought a house. Mostly partying. Didn't think about tomorrow at all. It was horrible. But it was great. I got memories that no one could top. Cops hated me, my neighbors tried to kick me out of my own neighborhood—they thought I was a renter. And I'm just a kid that bought this house, so leave me alone. I took everything for granted, was making way too much money, partied too much. Too many so-called friends, too many girls, a wild life, and it didn't stop for a long time. I went crazy for a while.

How'd your drivers license do?

It was so bad. I mean literally one month I got, I mean mind you they were fix it tickets, but I got a ticket every day for 30 days. No joke, that's real. At 17 I bought the convertible Porsche. Always suspended license. Always just for speeding and crazy shit. You could put it hard in hand with the bike riding, no regard for anything. Just try to do crazy shit. I guess it kind of followed into my daily life.

Do you have any regrets from that era?

I wish I'd listened. It would've made my life a lot easier. Saved some money and not drank so much. Drinking led me towards hanging out with people that just wanted to have a good time, and it took me away from bike riding. So as far as actually riding my bike, no regrets, but a lot of the residuals that came along with it, the fame and money, that's what I regret. Although it did bring a lot of other good times, crazy times that I don't regret. The path that I took, it was cool.

// JOSH WHITE

Feathered blond hair, California tan, winning smile, massive airs, and ninja variations. Just a few of the things Josh White was known for back in the day. Perhaps the biggest thing he was known for, though, was being UNKNOWN and arriving on the scene out of the blue. The GT team manager brought him over to Wizard and introduced him. Josh was easygoing, funny. Said he was mainly a ground rider...then climbed up on the halfpipe in the parking lot. An hour later we'd captured a bounty of insane aerial photos of Josh. He wound up on the cover of the very next issue. That was that. Overnight he went from Oregon nobody, to California somebody. His freestyle lifestyle was 100% changed. Like switching from black to white.

Do you have any regrets?

I rode to Lionel Ritchie at a contest. Believe it or not. It was an indoor contest and my song was "Dancin' on the Ceiling." I was a dork, dude. I picked the worst songs. I regret it, too. I totally regret it. If I could do it over again I would pick Slayer, *Reign in Blood*.

Were you influenced at all by skateboarding?

You know what's funny? The whole time I was freestyling, I always looked over to the skateboard community and I always knew that they were cooler than us. They had better videos, they had better ads, and they always just seemed...hipper. We always seemed more, like, dorky. *In Search of Animal Chin* was one of the coolest videos ever made. And I was thinkin', "Why can't we be more like skateboarding? These guys got it down. They're freakin' hot. They're hip. They're makin' fun of themselves. They know exactly what they're all about." Freestylers were trying to be something that they weren't.

How did freestyle affect your life?

Well, it introduced me to the big world, that's for sure. I grew up in Ashland, Oregon, a little sheltered town, so I didn't know much about the world. Being with GT may not have paid the best, but they toured like crazy, so that was cool because I immediately went to China, Japan, Australia...I toured the world. It really showed me the whole planet. Most people I meet in my life have not even been outside the US. Not only have I been to fifty of the fifty states, I've been around the world, and that's awesome. Think how much money that would take to do that on your own. So I really appreciate that.

You kind of cultivated the image of a ladies' man. Do you have anything to say about that?

That was the greatest benefit of being a rider. I don't care about anything else. I don't care about being in the magazines or any of that. Growing up my whole life I couldn't get anywhere with the ladies, but as soon as I got on a bike team and started traveling, all of a sudden, the women were there. I took advantage of that. That was something I enjoyed. The international women are pretty hot, especially the French women.

You seemed to appear quickly on the scene. And you were kind of in and out in just a couple short years.

Yeah, it was a fast and furious couple years. Three years of riding hard. I lived it up. I really made the most of it in a short period of time. I was with GT from 86 to 89, and then I took a couple years off and didn't ride at all, and then right around 91 or so I hooked up with Eddie Fola and we did a little Vans tour, but it was kind of under the radar. We did our own little shows. So yeah, that was it. GT was three years, and I enjoyed every minute of it.

What made you decided to get out of riding?

I got to the point where I hated competing. GT picked up Joe Johnson and he was the hot guy. He had the tailwhips going, and he was getting ready to turn pro, and I said to GT, "That's your contest guy. He's young, he's hungry, he's gonna give it all for you. Let me just be the touring guy. Let me just do shows and appearances and stuff." And they said I had to do contests. So I quit. That's how it happened. I didn't want to do contests anymore. I hated them. They weren't any fun for me. As a vert rider contests made you constantly push yourself into these crazy things you had to do. Nowadays, the top vert guys are making hundreds of thousands of dollars a year. I was making 30 grand a year.

What would you say was the most shocking thing you ever saw?

I saw Mike Dominguez at the Velodrome do a really good one-hand one-footed 540. High. Way high, out over the top. He was the first person I ever saw do a 540 variation. I was like, "Wow, that was pretty progressive. Nobody's ever done that before. Nobody." I was always a vert rider so I paid attention to vert riders. I didn't pay too much attention to the flatland guys. But when Mike would do a big 540 over the channel — the big canyon — that was always shocking.

Do you remember that day you went to Wizard Publications and ended up getting photographed riding a ramp in the parking lot?

GT set up the photo session. Bob Osborn came out, RL was out there, Windy [Osborn] was taking the pictures. I think Andy was out there watching a bit. Yeah, it was fun. It was the first chance I really had to just show off.

And you got the cover?

Yeah, I didn't expect that. It was a little tiny picture in the middle of the cover and the rest of the cover was white. It was Windy's idea. Her thought behind it was, "Well, if it's a little picture in the middle of the page, then it's going to draw your eye in and force you to focus in on that picture."



WINDY

Josh White showed up out of nowhere and ripped huge 540s at the Venice AFA contest a year earlier. But this was the day he got exposed in a big way. The Wizard staff clustered in the background are getting their minds blown as Josh blasts away for his cover debut.





JONZE

It was the only time they've ever done anything like that.

There was a lot of white space on that page. And your last name is White.

I don't know if she thought about it that way. It was more of a psychological thing. It made you want to stop and look closely at it. And it was a no-footed one-handed can-can. But I was a little bit annoyed that the picture wasn't the full page. I was like, "Yeah, I got my first cover, and it's little. Two inches by three inches."

How did your life change after that?

As far as people knowing who I was, I think that changed the most. Recognition. I'd go to a contest and people would say, "Hey, that's Josh White!"

What did Freestylin' mean to you as a rider?

I loved hanging out and talking to Lew [Mark Lewman], Andy [Jenkins], Windy, and Bob [Osborn]. Seeing all the offices. It was really cool. They had a little studio set up for photo sessions and the ramp out back. Bob always had his Porsche parked out there. I always loved going to Freestylin' and seeing everybody. It was awesome. Everyone was so friendly. I was always thinking in the back of my mind, "What an awesome place to work, what a fun job." They had the best magazine, hands down, so it was kind of like a mystical place. Like, "Wow, this is where it all happens." You go to the other BMX magazines' offices and it's no big deal. You go to Freestylin' and it was like, "This is the heartbeat of our sport, right here."

Did you ever sign contracts and were they a good deal for you?

I signed two. When I was living in Oregon, I signed a contract that was basically just for bikes. So it was a co-factory deal. And then after high school, I flew down to California and signed a full factory deal. GT never paid the highest amount. They were smart business men. They never overpaid anybody, so I knew that I wasn't making as much money as a lot of the other guys. But at the same time, I knew that the opportunities I had with GT were great because of the travel, the touring. They had a huge budget for touring. I was touring the world, man. You can't put a price on that, and I knew it. I wasn't super materialistic, so it's not like I was keeping track.

What's the most you ever won in a contest?

It wasn't much. I think it was at the Socko contest at the Velodrome. I won vert and overall and I made a little bit of money in flatland. I think combined, it was like 1700 bucks.

How would you get psyched up when the pressure was on? Like at a show or a contest?

It was hard, because I really didn't like competing that much. I would try to ride the best I could. I couldn't look at the crowd or I'd get nervous. I had to pretend I was just practicing. But I really didn't like competing that much, it kind of took the soul out of it. I just wanted to ride for the fun of it. I liked shows. I started getting scared of guys like Mat Hoffman. He was freakin' psycho. He would do anything. I was like, "I'm going to have to ride above my ability just to beat this guy," and I really didn't feel like that was necessary. I just wanted to ride in my comfort zone. I didn't want to keep pushing myself. I was already pushing myself as far as I was willing to. Mat was already above what I was doing and he wasn't even a pro yet. And so I was done competing. I just wanted to do shows, have fun, ride for the fun of it. Ride for the crowds. I didn't want to ride for the judges anymore, and that's kind of where it ended for me. That's where it ended for a lot of people.

What's your best memory of Camarillo and riding that ramp?

Just hanging out, cranking the music, it was sunny...just having fun. It reminded me of kind of why I got into it. Having fun riding with your friends, just jamming. It wasn't like we were training. We were riding because we loved it, and that was the most enjoyable thing. It brought you more back to your roots. You were riding, and at the same time you were practicing, but it didn't feel like practice. And that's the way it should be. So that's what I loved about being in Camarillo. And everyone there rode ramps. There were no flatlanders, there were no dirt jumpers. We were just vert riders. That's all it was, and so it was pure. Every day was a vert day.

*The most stretched no-footers in the business.
Just for kicks he throws in an X-up.*

// DIZZ HICKS

The spikes gleaming, the hair flying, the fists pounding, the metal blaring, the horns held high, the seat grinding, the Tuff Wheels spinning, the wedge ramp flexing, the limbs extending, and the electricity bending. Those are the things that clicked into place every time John "Dizz" Hicks rode the lightning and brought the thunder.

How did you get into freestyle?

I was raised on two wheels. My dad made sure that me and my brother both had motorcycles before we could walk. That's what really made me a BMX star, I think. I was doing really good at motocross. I'd won a state championship, and I was trying to recover from a broken ankle. I was training on the BMX bike before I got back on the motorcycles. I'd gone to the world championship BMX races in Vegas and I saw Bob Haro. Haro was my main influence. I saw him fooling around doing tricks. I was the best jumper in town because that's all we did back then. So when I saw him doing tricks and stuff it immediately changed my life. I didn't want to do anything else.

And come to think of it, you did run a coaster the whole time. Was that influenced by Haro?

It sure was. For the short ramp, doing short ramp and ground, that's all he was doing that day. I was running a freewheel at the time but to ride the ramps the way I wanted to was easier with a coaster brake. And rollbacks, he was doing tons of rollback tricks, and that's the whole reason why I switched, so I could roll back at high speed.

What did you like about wedge ramps?

I really don't know. I just liked it. I think it was not as dangerous as hitting a quarterpipe. And watching Bob Haro that day riding his wedge, he looked flawless. The whole flow of him. That was the first thing I built, so I guess that's why. No one was really into it that much after a while. I mean we used it in the contests, but it wasn't big.

You injected your style, the heavy metal flair, into your riding.

Oh absolutely. My whole personality, that was me. I was really heavily into the metal scene, the underground, the whole Metallica scene, before anybody was into it. I'm from NorCal, which is where all that stuff started. I happened to be at that age where the music really influenced me. And I wanted to stick with my style because it went with my riding, so that's how that all came about. I always wanted to be in a heavy metal band and could never play any instruments. So that was my chance to go out and perform in front of people being who I wanted to be.

And the kids really responded to it.

Oh yeah, I loved it. They thrived on it, and I thrived on them, so the whole package worked together really well. There was always that little group of headbangers by the short ramp at every show.

The CW team was so distinctive in the all-black uniforms. Nobody was wearing stuff like that.

Yeah, me and Ceppie [Maes] both had our own styles. I mean everybody had their own little thing but it was all pretty much the same. RL and Buff had their little GQ thing, and Ron Wilkerson was new wave. So we came in and it was that other piece of the puzzle. You couldn't get any magazine coverage, you couldn't compete, you couldn't do anything without the proper gear. The black uniforms were our way of expressing our selves without changing.

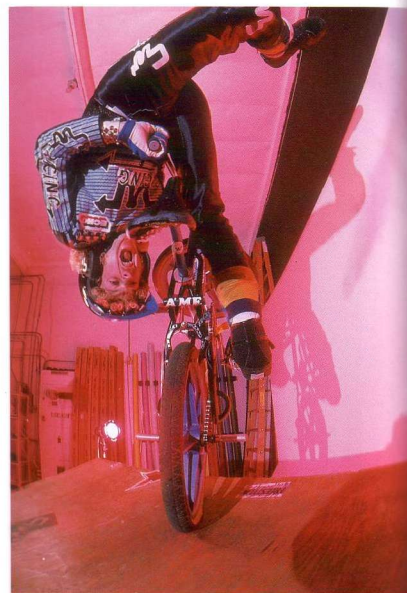
What did you think about entering contests?

I hated competitions, that wasn't my style. I didn't want the pressure. If the pressure was on me at a contest, I choked. I did good at some of the first contests where it was all combined—ramp, ground, and everything. That was more my style. At the AFA finals at Venice Beach, I was competing against Dennis McCoy. We were battling for the lead, and I didn't win—I got second there—but I think that was one of the most memorable contests because I was at a professional level where I could be number one or two. And from then on, I just hated it so much. Every time there was contest, I would've rather not been there. But in those days, you had to compete to be anywhere in the sport. So it was an up and down ride for me for a while. You know, people would say, "You're falling apart, Dizz. You're doing shitty." I'd be getting fifth place in contests. It was depressing, but yeah, that just wasn't my style. I'm a showman. I want to perform in front of people and be relaxed. And let my style come out.

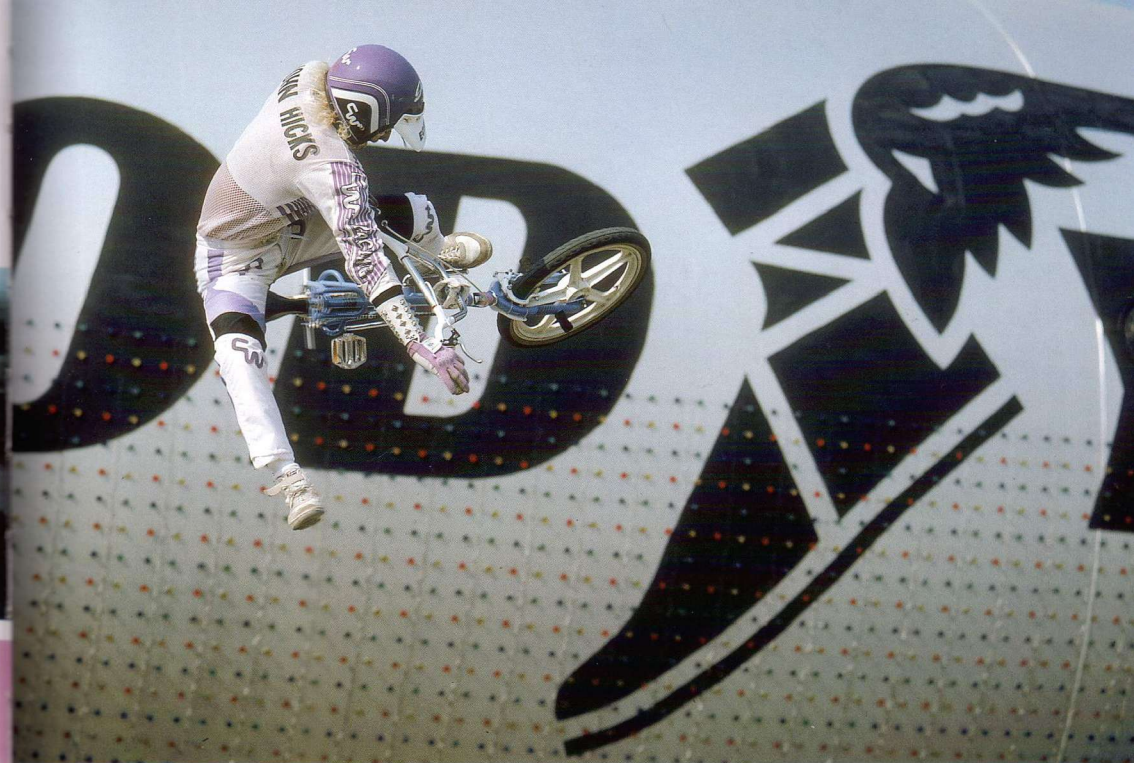
What kind of styles did the CW team bring together?

We had Mike Buff—he was a mixture of all kinds of weird stuff, but he was more or less your run-of-the-mill person—the straighty. You had Ceppie with his style—which was the LA new wave thing. And then you had me—which was the whole metal scene that was coming in. So our shows were more of a wide variety. At first I thought, "You know what? I can't ride with this guy." CW hired Ceppie and the first day I met him I was out busting airs on the quarterpipe and he wasn't riding it. I'm like, "I ain't riding with no one that can't bust airs. Yeah he's good on the ground, but I don't like his style, he looks like a queer. He had on some pointed leather shoes or something. I was all, 'This guy is not going to ride with me.'" That was honestly my first impression. And then it was like the best thing, because we were total opposites, but we were perfect together. And once we started doing shows, I was like, "Man, this is great. I really enjoy him. He's funny. He's a good guy." My whole thing changed on him.

Did you ever feel upstaged by the younger riders on CW?



WINDY



(left) Bank on the fact that Dizz was old school. Kick turn at Kashwa.

(above) The day this was shot, the blimp pilots were freaking out because they were afraid the wind would blow their precious dirigible into the quarterpipe and slit it open like a pig.

I was getting into my 20s and I'd had a couple bad crashes—big air crashes. And I was basically afraid of busting big airs anymore. Sure, I could do your one-handed one-footers eight feet out, but we needed someone to that could pull off a 540, and Gary Pollak and Tim Rodgers were the two guys to make the show. To put us all three together, we really put on some good ramp shows. 'Cause Gary and Timmy were busting big airs. They were four or five years younger than me, and you know how that goes. Gary Pollak was just awesome. I can't say enough about that kid. Hopefully I didn't ruin his life too much. I remember as clear as day we were at his house and his mom saying, "Oh yeah, Dizz and Ceppie, they don't seem like too bad of guys for him to leave on tour with." And I was just thinking to myself, "Oh my God, if you had any idea what's going to happen to him."

Did you ever get to combine riding and music? Like collaborate with a band?

No, I always dreamed of that. I always wanted to get on the stage and perform with Twisted Sister and just bust a couple kick turns up there or bust some airs. I dreamed of it. And just getting up on the stage or doing videos, when Metallica finally started making videos. I always wanted to be in one of their videos. I still dream about that.

What led you out of freestyle?

The whole metal scene and the whole rock and roll scene was party and stay up late. And I just fell victim to that slowly. I didn't jump right into it, but soon I started trying hard drugs. And once I got into some meth-amphetamines, it turned my whole world upside-down just like it would anybody else's. That was towards the end of my career, like 1987. That's when I really got into it badly, so my mind wasn't focused on the sport anymore. I was more or less concerned about going out and having a good time. I drank because I was an alcoholic, and you know you mix the two together and you're looking for disaster. I've been clean for 18 years.

Your style would have merged well with street riding.

Yeah, but I couldn't do it. My mind was elsewhere. I can't explain to you how powerful that kind of drug is, but once you do it, you're hooked. You're going to do whatever it takes to use, so of course I threw the bike to the side and was like, "I'll ride when I feel like it." That drug is an upper, so I'd go practice, but it was wasteful practice. I'd be doing stuff I already knew how to do, and my mind wouldn't go past that to try to get better. I'd be doing the same thing. I just kind of leveled out at a plateau, and people would say, "Oh, you haven't learned anything new." And that's the reason why, because my mind was warped. I was wanting to go to concerts and hang out with heavy metal people. I'd go to speed metal shows every night if I could. So I just said, "The hell with it, this is what I'm going to go do. I'm going to party now." And I gave it up. But today, that whole flowing upside-down style of riding, I started all that and I was working on it, but I never really perfected it. I see these guys now with all that upside-down rolling stuff and I say to myself, "Wow, that's perfect." It's kinda satisfying, because I put a lot of time into that sport. It was my life. And it still is.

// CEPPIE MAES

Call him the co-inventor of the locking brake lever and the GPV scene. Call him the guy with the weirdest balancing tricks of all. Call him the Howard Hughes of soap box derby racing. Call him the perfect counterbalance to his teammates, Dizz Hicks and Gary Pollak. Call him all of those things. In the beginning he hung with Haro, got jumpy for GJS, and came to roost on CW. It was on CW that Cep's style and personality shot him into the limelight as a showman, joker, and ground maven extraordinaire. He was the right guy at the right time, in the right places, where things just happened to be happening.

How did you get cast in ET?

I was at the local BMX track at Ascot, and some scouts came by. They went in and talked to the parents, next thing you know we were at a casting call. It just fell together.

And what do you remember about working on that production?

We were only 12 or 13 at the time, so it was all an adventure. Cameras and lights, makeup rooms, wardrobe, they do your hair. We were all goofing off, running around on the set. We rode our bikes and they filmed us. It was cool to be in the spotlight.

How did you meet Bob Haro?

Bob used to hang out with Gomez [Robert Cardoza], my neighbor. Bob's shop was right up the street from my house. I used to go up there and hang out, sit in front of his garage door, wait for him to walk by and see if I could get his attention. Bob befriended me and I was able to go inside, he would show me designs and stuff like that. When we did the ET thing they asked for more people to ride, and we were like, 'Ask Bob Haro, he's right up the street.' That's how we hooked him into it.

How did you get introduced to freestyle?

The first trick I ever learned was a curb endo. Haro taught Gomez and Gomez taught me, and that was my first introduction into freestyle. The BMX Action trick team was doing a show for these Japanese distributors and stuff, inside the Wizard publications warehouse, and somehow I got in there through Kuwahara. I started learning more tricks. Jeff Utterback, from GJS, used to do clinics at our local track. I got a bike from GJS, it was just a really quick thing that happened. The GJS frame and fork alone probably weighed 50 pounds. It was like a giant platform on the top tube, a little kicker thing, and loop stands in the back. Three sets of pegs on the fork so there was a ladder on there. The handlebars had shit sticking out towards you, away from you, down the sides. A lot of people came up with certain tricks, because they tried to utilize that stuff. I always thought the bolt on stuff seemed kind of dangerous. But the scene opened up and they were trying to fill any void at the time. I think you guys wrote in one of your articles that all the bugs came out of the woodwork, and that's how it was, everybody was coming out and if you were in the right place at the right time, that's what happened.

I remember that photo when you were on GJS, the one where you were jumping off the bike like a crazy startled cat.

Yeah, the no-hander no-footer flyaway thing. That was the first trick I ever came up with, and I guess Oz [Bob Osborn] liked how it looked and he did that whole studio set up.

Then you got on CW. What was the best part about that?

It opened up creative stuff. They taught me how to weld and everything. I was able to weld up the bike the way I wanted it, fully custom. Pieces were shortened, pieces were added, things taken out here and there. Stuff like that.

How old were you?

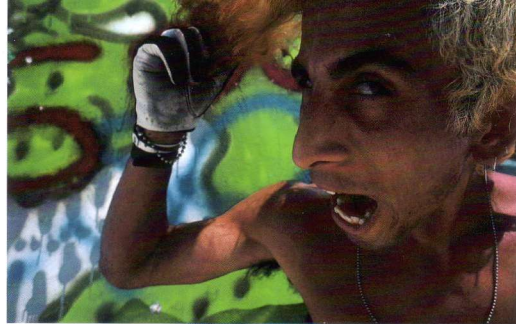
I was probably 16 or 17.

You and Dizz Hicks were an iconic team in freestyle.

I always felt that we had a cool partnership. Somehow it worked really well, the combination. It all went together. We all wanted to be wild. On tour, we'd go out on those midnight bike rides, everyone would gather up, and do crazy shit, streaking through the streets, chasing each other down the highway. Kids identified because we had different styles and different images, not only freestyle riding but an image that went along with it. Sometimes I think the style and the image were bigger than our riding skills. I never felt like I was super great, I felt like I was sort of mediocre, but there were a few good ideas that I came out with.

You had a cool riding style.

I just never learned how to do a rock walk. I was making up what I could do, to compensate for what I couldn't do. So that's how a lot of that stuff came together for me. My thing was about doing



The original squatting lawnmower spread from A Puppet No More, an Off The Deep End classic. Non-readers will have no idea what that means, and that's okay.



ADAM

shows, a performance, not a competition. I always choreographed to songs, and I think that's how a lot of my stuff came together, trying to cue accents on beats. That's how the no-handed no-footed flyaway came out, because there was something in the song I was trying to make that section stand out more, so that trick developed.

What was your jam back then?

I put together a routine to "What I Like About You" by The Romantics.

What was your best trick?

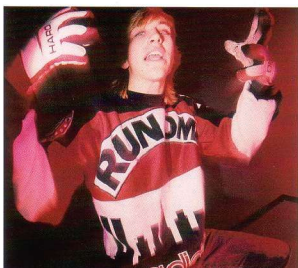
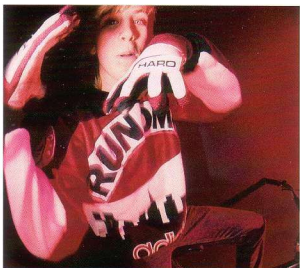
Probably the finger flip or the stubble duck. That was right at the end of my CW reign, like '87 or '88. I'm most proud of those tricks, because I still see people doing similar stuff today. I still hear talk about it, like I heard Kevin Jones say it was one of the toughest tricks to learn. Just having him say that, that was a shining moment.

You were one of the pioneers of that whole Gravity Powered Vehicles scene.

McGoo [Harold McGruther] and I were at CW one night and we put a bike together upside-down with odd sized wheels, and we were like, 'this looks like a drag bike.' And we took it up to Turnbull Canyon, then coasted down the hill. Then we called up everybody and basically gave them a rough idea of what to do. The rule was run what you bring. That's how all that came together. We did a night run with flashlights strapped to our bikes. It just kept going and going and going, up to that GPV world championships down the Palm Springs tramway road.

What did you take away from that era that's part of you today?

Being creative, seeing that anything is possible, anybody could do it. I credit a lot of my life to that. Like at CW the way I learned manufacturing techniques. I incorporate that into my soapbox cars that I build now. It's pretty cool, that's my thing that I'm totally into right now. Soap box racing. As childish as it sounds, it's still fun.



92 // DENNIS MCCOY

Rapping flatlander.

Kansas City rogue.

Ripping ramp rider.

Dennis McCoy has been all of these things. DMC's BMX roots run three decades deep, and there's a lot of room for adaptation and progress in those years. But the thing that has never changed is his all-encompassing zeal for riding bikes. Here is a conversation we shared about that subject.

I was thinking back to the stories about how you got sponsored, and got the attention of Bob Haro. Tell me about that.

That was the summer of '84. We found out Haro was coming into town and the demo was a good 25 miles from home. My friends and I decided to make a day of it and ride out to the thing. The demo was at a mall. Our crew found a way to get our bikes inside the mall through a back door. I remember Bob [Haro] kind of scratching his head and going, "What the hell? All these kids got their bikes inside?" I wanted to ride the ramp desperately, but they told us we couldn't for liability reasons. All my friends were basically bragging for me. It made me a little uncomfortable but they were like, "You gotta see this guy ride!" After the show Bob Haro joined us out in the parking lot, and everything I could do at the time I nailed better than ever. Like, I could do front wheel 540s, and I did a front wheel 720 in front of Bob Haro. Maybe it was a sign looking toward later in my career that I could pull stuff off when it mattered, or maybe it was just the luck of the moment. Bob gave me a card and said he wanted to sponsor me. Ironically, I didn't see it as a big opportunity. I was riding a GT race bike, and I remember thinking, "I like the bike that I'm on." I respected the hell out of Bob, don't get me wrong, but there weren't freestyle contests yet so there wasn't this huge incentive. Bob told me that they liked overall riders, and he wanted to make sure I was good at riding ramps too, which was the other thing I did — I just had no way of showing him. I went to the ABA Grands in '84 planning to race one last time, got there and changed my mind. There was a big flatland thing going on there. On a whim I decided to see if Bob Haro was staying at my hotel. I phoned up his room and said, "I'm that guy you met in Kansas City." He invited my friends and I up into his room. I showed him some photos of me riding a quarterpipe. He offered me a sponsorship deal that day. The AFA was starting up a series and he wanted to fly me out to the first event of the year in California. Suddenly a light bulb turned on in my head, like, "Cool, I'll be able to travel!"

That's a life-changer moment.

Yeah, it really was. That summer of '84 was probably the one I hold most dearly. It was the summer after my junior year in high school and I rode every waking moment, usually 'til past sunrise. I knew I would be attending college in about a year and would probably get a job the next summer. Riding a bike for a living was almost unheard of at the time. I was stressing out, thinking, "This is the last summer I get to ride my bike every single day and sort of live BMX full-time. I'm going to have to join the real world. I'm sure I'll still ride, but..." And then, my senior year, I started traveling to contests.

When it rains it pours.

Things seemed to change overnight. I got a full scholarship and went to school for a semester. Then I got an offer to do some shows at SeaWorld.

It was actually my mom who suggested that maybe I take a semester off from school to focus on riding. I flew out to San Diego to stay with [Marc] McGlynn to do six weeks of demos, but then I really got the gist of what the SeaWorld shows were all about. I decided it wasn't me, dressing up in some kind of whale suit in between shows, so I spent six weeks just riding.

How was it touring for Haro?

The thing that stands out would be the Haro Tour in '87. It was me, [Rick] Moliterno and Joe Johnson — I think we were kind of designated as the B team. We got to do maybe Boise, Idaho, while the A team [Ron Wilkerson, Dave Nourie and Brian Blyther] were going to Switzerland. But we made the most of it. The quality of our shows was right up there with anybody's, and it was just a cool time period in the sport. You didn't have televised comps, you didn't have videos, you didn't have YouTube, so people saw things for the first time when you showed up live in their town, and that really stood out. In hindsight, the enthusiasm behind the sport remains unrivaled. It's bigger now than it's ever been, but it had so much energy back then because the entire sport was so new to everybody. It's going to be hard to ever re-create that.

How about pushing the limits of being a rider? You were kind of the first person to really do a lot of cool, long, coasting tricks and link combos together.

The one thing that I take a lot of pride in is just doing a lot to help the progression of flatland so that it started to become one long, linked routine instead of static tricks. But man, it became clear early on that the progression was going to be out of hand for as long as people were going to keep riding their bikes. It's still pretty amazing that every year somebody ups the ante and more and more stuff comes out. But you have to appreciate the fact that some of the steps that were taken way back in the '80s are still pretty big ones, even to this day. Today, people go a little higher and they're a bit smoother, but we were going almost as high back then on crap ramps and crappier bikes. The tailwhip was something Johnson came up with back in '88. People are still just doing triple whips on occasion, but hell, Joe was double whipping by '89, so you have to really put that in perspective. We were pushing it pretty hard.

Let's talk about when street riding got popular.

Freestylin' had so much influence over what people considered in/not in. I remember being a little shocked how almost overnight it switched from if you did good in AFA contests, that's how you got the coverage — to suddenly it was Craig Grasso doing something out on the street. He had this street look, so to speak. It was sort of ironic to me, because I grew up being this semi-thug Kansas City kid that rode street and flatland and everything all day long. And just because I got sponsored by Haro and they asked me to wear a uniform and go to all these contests, my image sort of became "the contest rider guy." But what people called street, we just called riding. It's what we did when we went out on Fridays and Saturdays in Kansas City. It was kind of strange to me, because suddenly street riding was popular, but it meant you had to be out where the photographers and magazines were to get covered. With contests, the magazines came to you.

After you became the new iconic pro, you got the attention of Micki Conte as someone who was trying to act as your sports agent.

Once I turned pro, things started to move fast, but there were still the guys who I looked up to in magazines. Eddie Fiola called me, and if he calls me about something I'm going to listen. He told me he'd been working with this lady Micki Conte and she'd gotten him a Levis commercial. And he told me that he'd made "X" amount of dollars, which was more than I'd made my

WINDY



Tweaked topside one-footed X-up, back when they were still called helicopters.



entire life at that point. And that I might be wise to work with her. He kind of summed it up as he'd be the ethnic looking dark-haired guy and I'd be the blond-haired, blue-eyed guy. I started working with her. And actually a lot of her ideas were good, but then she'd find a way to rub somebody wrong or go about things the wrong way. I can't fault her completely. You didn't know who to trust back then, but I really wasn't worried about it. I just wanted to ride my bike. It was never about the money for me. The Micki years are fun to look back on and laugh, but put it this way: I could actually afford a modest Kansas City house after just a couple of years of riding bikes for a living. And just pay for it. Like, "How much are interest rates?" Fuck that. "Give me twice the size of the yard because I want to build a vert ramp in back."

Do you have a shining moment — a favorite time?

My shining moment would be the run-off with RL Osborn at the '86 AFA Finals in Compton. After 5 contests of 5 minute runs, the AFA flatland title was coming down to a one minute run-off with RL. Jim Ford at Haro wanted to protest our original run scores because most people felt I deserved the win already, but I just wanted to ride some more. I guess they were afraid I would choke, but I just wanted to do some more footwork for the crowd to Run-DMC. It all worked out in the end. My favorite era would be my first trip to New York City, summer of '86. I was in a cast. I wanted to go ride the Madison Square Garden contest and I'd broken my ankle on the Haro Tour. I went out there anyway, just to see it and participate. I stayed at Pete Kearney's house, and we took the ferry over to Manhattan, to go ride New York City. That day was one of the highlights of my life: Going to Washington Square Park where it's a bunch of New Yorkers congregating — and at a time when flatland was so new — to ride flatland. I could do quite a bit with my cast on. A big group of us rode flatland in Washington Square Park and then we went on a street ride that lasted well into the early hours of the morning. If there was any way to sum up how cool it'd be to do what you love for a living, it is the fact that I got to travel to New York and see what the New York lifestyle was all about. To be around friends, and not have a care in the world. It didn't matter if I rode until the sun came up the following day. And it was a big stretch, after thinking that the summer of '84 was going to be my last opportunity to ride my bike every day.

The Midwest is the Midbest. A triple shot of rogues... Rick Moliterno, DMC, and Brian Belcher, out for a midnight roll.

// JOE JOHNSON

Massive airs are made in Massachusetts. Hands free, no-footed can-cans, nothings, tailwhips, tailwhips times two...all those and more were items Joe kept in his Vision hip sack full of tricks. Joe would unleash these at height, and then quickly stuff them back inside, as if they were dangerous things not to be allowed into the wild. It was easy to be hypnotized by his exceptionally smooth and stylish ways. But the risk and reward were apparent just by looking at Joe's facial expression; a puzzling blend of grim determination, scowling intensity, and sheer pleasure. Here is what happened when he opened that word-hole and spoke.

What was going on with the "Subliminal: Joe Johnson" little ads and mentions in *Freestylin'*? Remember that? Yeah, that was just Spike. It seemed like he was always messing with me. He knew that I hated it when there were photos where I didn't have my mouth guard on and I had all these contorted faces. I just couldn't help it. So whenever he had a chance to use a photo of me without a mouth guard on, it seemed like he did.

What was your shining moment in freestyle?

Probably the tailwhip air was the biggest trick in freestyle for me. Doing that in a big comp for the first time was the highlight. That was a trick that took me a long time to learn — months — and I landed it for the first time at my house just two weeks before the comp, and then to pull it off in a contest, I was pretty psyched. **How many times had you pulled tailwhip airs off before that? You said you did it at home, but did you have it down, or was it kinda risky?**

I had it pretty down. Anyone that does them now, I think they'd probably agree that once you figure out the feeling of it, how you need to be positioned to do it, it becomes pretty consistent after that. Once you get it, you got it.

From that point of pulling that first one at a contest in Wayne, New Jersey, in 1988, then the next year you had done the double whip, then a triple?

The next year I did the double tailwhip, but I never pulled the triple tailwhip. I tried it one time at Woodward and didn't really come too close. I just tried it once.

How did you push yourself to progress back then?

There was a really good group of guys that I rode with at home. Once I got out of high school, the guys I rode with either went to college or they got jobs, so at that point I roamed around and stayed with different riders that were able to get paid for it. But the biggest progression for me was when I was still in high school and living at my house, and I had a great setup in my backyard. There were six or seven really cool guys that would session all the time. They were all good, and we would push each other really hard. The motivation was that the better you got, the more fun it seemed.

Would you guys always try new variations? Like the Neil Armstrong air, that was what — both feet on the front pegs in the air?

Yeah, my friend Brian Curran, he was suggesting tricks and I'd try them. We were goofing around and he suggested that one. There just weren't as many as variations as there are now, so there was a lot of pride in coming up with something that you hadn't seen anyone else try it. There were limitless amounts of variations to try. The no-handed air, that was one of my bigger variations. I mean, Jeff Carroll was doing them at the time, also, but really no one else.

How did it go from you being a talented local guy to touring and being a full factory rider?

There was an AFA contest in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, in 1985 and Ron Wilkerson was there. He rode at my house a day or two before the contest because he was staying with Paul Delario, who was a local pro. Ron came to my house to ride, and he saw me ride and gave me a Haro jersey for the contest. He went back to the guys at Haro and told them about me. They sponsored me, sent me to contests, and it kind of went from there.

What was your first touring experience like?

A little bit of a hiccup at the beginning. My first time on tour, it was April of 1986. I was still in high school. The whole team was touring and in Florida, and Tony Murray sprained his knee. I was new to Haro, so they called me up and asked me if I wanted to go down and replace him for the rest of tour — a week in Florida and Georgia, and two weeks in Bermuda for shows. I was going to replace one of these idols of mine, and I just couldn't believe it. So they fly me down the next day and my first show I carved up the ramp, landed right straight on the pavement and broke my wrist. They flew me home the next day and I went back to school. It was brutal. I break my wrist, miss the tour, and that was such a bummer. After that it seemed like I was out for a year. To miss just one year in 1986 seemed like such a big chunk of my riding. It wasn't a whole year that I was out, but it's funny how slow time went by back then. I was going to contests for only four or five years, and that injury seemed like a long time. But nowadays, that time frame is nothing. Five years go by in the blink of an eye.

What did you do during the down time?

I did a lot of ramp building while I wasn't riding. We developed the whole woods behind my house. We built a few more ramps back there and a good dirt track. So there was all kinds of shit that we built up. It wasn't a horribly broken wrist, so I was putting around on my bike probably after a couple weeks. I was still able to stay busy that way. I just kind of took it day by day.

It seems like you walked away while you were still a strong competitor.

I got out of it the end of 1990. I started obsessing more and more about getting hurt, and thinking more and more about what could go wrong. It would just eat at me. I'd think about that all the time. And I continued to get hurt, which, you know, it comes with the territory. I accepted that. But it's a fact that I'd obsess about;

Dangled double-dose of can-can madness. This is Joe's backyard ramp, the spot where the tailwhip air was invented.





(left) New York style pole jam at the Brooklyn Banks. See all those ramps and people in the background? No permits, no permission, no problem. (above) Neil Armstrong got the glory of the first moon landing. Joe Johnson receives the glory of inventing this variation.

what if this happens, what if that happens? And that affects your riding. You're never really having as much fun. So I started going to school.

Do you have any regrets around that?

Yeah, it crosses my mind. I wish I'd tried to stay in it longer. I wonder what it would've been like if I'd stayed in it. And then I come back to reality and, well not necessarily come back to reality, but like, what if I did ride and I did get hurt and then where would I be then? And to think that way makes me feel a little better, but there's some regret with quitting so early. I definitely have a bad shoulder, my knees are kind of shot, and I have a bad back. Even though I quit when I was 21, I still feel like this, so I can't imagine if I rode 'til was 35 how I'd feel. The guys who have been doing it for so long, it's amazing what they put themselves through. It's just hard to believe.

// MAURICE MEYER

City sharpened and hooked into the skate scene, Maurice came up kicking it with his brother Ray (had a model on Santa Cruz), and the neighbor kids (Tommy and Tony Guerrero). As freestyle BMX got hot, Drob took to the streets to carpe the diem and hone his cycle craft. Between back-alley bombing runs and driveway hits down the Petrero hills, this son of San Francisco made his way into Golden Gate Park. There he joined the early mecca of trackstanding, front wheel hoppin' action. His future status as a Skyway star was confirmed when he and few others from the legendary Curb Dogs street unit wound up plastered all over the first issue of *Freestylin'*.

What was the Golden Gate Park scene like in the early 80s?

Golden Gate Park was the start of "the meeting point," as far as meeting people on bikes that I didn't already know. The Park scene was just people from the city at first, and then after a while, we'd start to see people from outside the city there, like Damon Frost and Vander [Dave Vanderspek]. I think '83 was when it really started to hit, and then when *Freestylin'* came out, that was like a double shot of espresso. We started to see people from all over — from Europe and everything. They'd just stop by there and check it out. Damon was like the smooth-as-glass flatland guy who had tons of style. He rode rims and was a real tall guy with the total dress style down. He was just a stylish guy period. And then there was Vander, the total thrasher — all buff with skate stickers all over his bike. Totally different styles, but they both stood out in the Park.

How did Curb Dogs start?

I couldn't even say exactly how Vander started the Curb Dogs. He and I talked about it, and we did the first shows as far as I know. We wanted it to be bike and skate and pretty loose. We wanted to get sponsored, and we thought we could do all this cool stuff. Now, it seems to be a little more cliché to not 'sell out' or anything like that, but it wasn't like that then. We didn't have this attitude against the companies, but we were definitely not into the uniforms at the time. We knew that bikes evolved from motorcycles, but it was time to lose that. We had way more relations to skating and that style of clothing. We wanted to bike and skate, and we wanted a loose image. We weren't trying to crash anything, we just wanted to be more legit in our own minds.

Vander was entrepreneurial — always doing side businesses, and trying to figure out ways to elevate himself, the scene and his friends.

Yeah, that still blows me away. When I put together that Curb Dogs web page, I was like, "Holy crap, he had somehow worked with somebody to get a trailer and a wooden halfpipe to shows at 19 years old." I've only found one picture of that rig, but how does a 19-year-old kid work this out? He was always doing stuff. If you went over there, he'd be printing a shirt out in the garage or something.

He put out a Curb Dogs video, and that was pretty rare for the era — especially for independent guys. The ramp jam with Joe Lopes, that was pretty monumental.

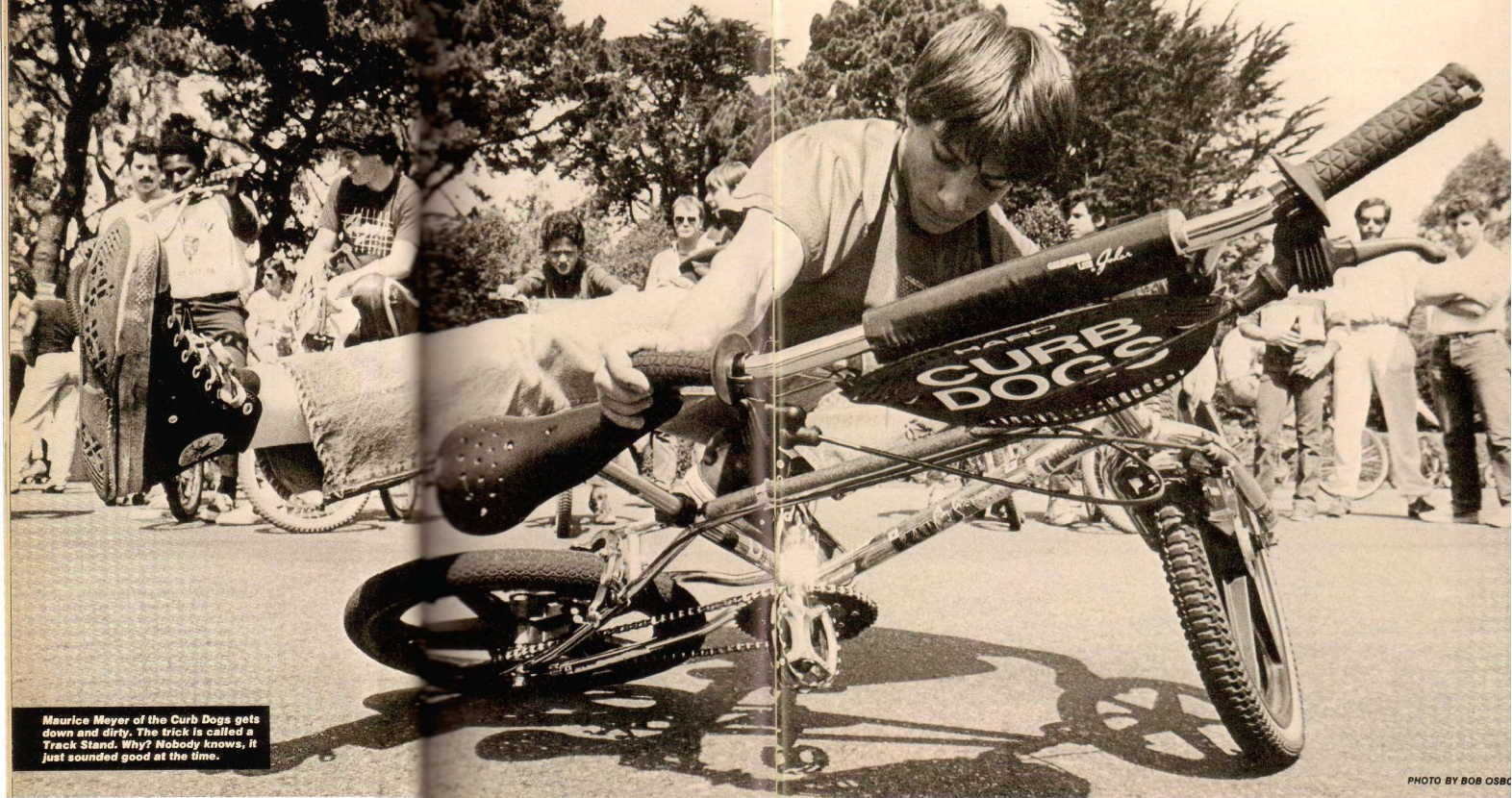
As far as I know, that was the first pro vert halfpipe contest — wooden ramp. That was just him trying to tie it to skating, because he rode with Joe Lopes all the time on that same ramp.

Curb Dogs was a cool crew. It was a point of pride to be a Curb Dog, but at the same time, Vander was so inclusive about it. Like, he'd make anybody an honorary member.

Yeah, it really was a step towards the Club Homeboy thing. He'd crack me up, 'cause he'd go riding with someone and then he'd go, "Yeah, dude, Christian Hosoi is a Curb Dog now." It was also kind of strange because when the Curb Dogs started, there were other teams here. Karl Rothe and his brother had the Sure Footed Freestyle Team. There were a few others — Ground Control, 2-Hip...

How did you go about getting on Skyway?

Vander and I were riding and got a little circle going outside this big ABA race up at Cow Palace. I was riding with my head down doing tricks and stuff, and Vander gets to talking with John Rodman, the inventor of the Tuff Wheel. John was saying they might want to get some freestyle guys. They were already sponsoring people for wheels, but they wanted an actual freestyle team. They'd already done some shows, I think with Andy Paterson over in Europe. Skyway European tours didn't get much coverage out of the US magazines. But man, that first tour, it was nuts how much coverage we got in the UK. We went over there and it was like we had a five-page spread in three different issues of the same magazine. It was crazy. We were like,



Maurice Meyer of the Curb Dogs gets down and dirty. The trick is called a Track Stand. Why? Nobody knows, it just sounded good at the time.

PHOTO BY BOB OSORIO

"No way! This is insane." It definitely made me realize that there was a bigger scene, like Neil Ruffell and Craig Campbell.

What impact did being raised in the city have on you as a rider?

Well, it was street riding in the form of actually pedaling to get where you're going, and hitting stuff along the way — I'm not talking street riding where you get in your car and go session something and then get in your car again. There're some streets that I used to consider runs. It probably hurt my flatland riding to be honest, because I got to a point where I couldn't just specialize on flatland. I'd retreat into what the original thing was for me — hitting some curbs, dodging cars, and doing whatever — that whole thing where you're looking for a new spot or street. Just simple stuff. It probably made me try scarier things than I would've as a flatlander.

What was the number one thing that contributed to your success as a rider?

Just a lot of timing. It's pretty funny because back when all the contests were starting up, I remember thinking to myself, Man, we got sponsored before we even entered contests. We were like the last people that got that. It seemed like everyone that was going to get any success was going to have to do good at contests, which, luckily, isn't really true anymore. I think it's cool how it's turned out now. People got video. There are a lot of different ways to get noticed — maybe not for the big money. Honestly, I don't know if I would've fared well if I was five years younger coming in in the late '80s or early '90s. I mean, the level of riding was so out of control. It was a smaller pond back in the early '80s, and we were close enough to the action. Proximity helps. At the same time, like a lot of people, I rode my ass off in the beginning. You know, quitting school probably helped.

Talk about some of Hugo Gonzalez's escapades.

I was there for a lot of that stuff. I got to see him do the fence spring. One of the craziest things at the time was at the "Joe's II" contest where he dropped in on a super-wet masonite ramp and he was doing three- or four-foot airs out of the thing. His nose hang-ups were pretty gnarly too. He was doing full-on double-bonker hangs going into that ramp. The craziest thing that I saw him do that was out of blue was that 360 — or probably 900 — jump at Mission Pier in San Diego. We were doing a Skyway show. I think it was one of those collaborative shows, like some sort of "Just Say

No" show. And Hugo saw the trick ramps and he saw the water and he was like, "I want to do a lake jump." So we set up the ramp, and he was telling this dude with a boat to put it near the dock. I remember seeing him just pedaling his ass off, and he hit it and started spinning in the air, flying over this dude's boat. This was just a show — he wasn't going to win any AFA prize, he didn't even know if anyone was taking a picture. That was the main thing that epitomized Hugo — he was just doing it to blow people's minds. Whatever group of people was watching him, they got a show.

Does anything in your mind stand out as being corny from back then?

I was not a showman, so a lot of stuff looked corny to me. I didn't like the whole showmanship/judge thing, I'll be honest. Before *Freestylin'* magazine even came out I thought uniforms were kind of cheesy. The nylon and stuff. Definitely some of the products were silly. A lot of these weird little stander things. Skyway came out with a product without even asking us. I don't know how long that thing was on the drawing board or whatever, but if you look back, there's this racer guy named Eddie Sigmund posing like he's doing a trick on it. It looks like he's maybe doing a lawnmower, but he's just standing there. Totally staged. I'll give Robert Peterson some credit as industrious as he was. He made that little Peterson bar extender.

Oh yeah, the little spring-loaded seat stopper.

That thing was scary. If you rode ramps or ever did an X-up at speed, the idea of something that could pop out and wedge against your seat, you know, no way. When he first made that, I was like, "Dude, that's all you." It's funny because I still have the one that he gave me, which I never used. I was like, "Yeah, that's going right in the parts box."

What was your biggest reward from back then?

Meeting people and getting to know everybody. Hanging out and having a scene of our own. Back then, it was still in the era that sports were football, basketball, baseball. You know...try out for the team, get picked, do calisthenics, run around the field three times, and maybe you'll get to be second string. Sports were just a whole different thing back then. Seeing freestyle come into its own was really cool. To be there during that time was awesome. To see it go from "What are you doing riding a bike?" to "No way! That's cool!"

// CRAIG CAMPBELL

Always a quiet mellow guy, Craig let his bike skills do the screaming. The highest airs and hugest street moves were complimented with an impeccable smoothness, executed with the lightest touch. Rather ironic, considering his skills were forged in the fires of moon-cratered, ruddy bowls in UK skateparks. Craig was also an explorer, part of a British Invasion of sorts. He was part of a wave of guys like Dave Currey, Nick Philip, Lee Reynolds, and Jess Dyrenforth. These UK upstarts chased their dreams to the US to join the scene. They slept on couches, under ramps, in the street, always on the move and in the mix. They had little cash, awesome accents, big moves, and tons of talent. And they made an undeniable impact on two sides of an ocean.

How did freestyle affect your life?

Being a naturally shy person, it gave me an outlet to express my personality and creativity. I think I have always been unconventional, and I guess a bit of a non-conformist... which I'm not sure has always been a good thing.

When you think back to the days when you were 15, what were you like then?

I was very focused and determined with riding — that took over anything to do with education aside from photography, which was the only subject that interested me at school. Oh, and breakdancing on the basketball courts at breaks.

How are you different today?

I'm more aware of myself, and I don't bounce quite as well as I used to.

What would you have been, if you hadn't gotten into BMX?

I think something visual — photography or film. Seeing as I started riding at the age of 10, the last cool things I was into before were climbing trees, jumping off roofs, skidding on ice patches, diving through bushes, building drum kits from pots and pans, and skateboarding.

What was cool about freestyle in the 1980s?

The evolution of street riding, aka punk BMX.

What were the clichés in the scene?

Lots of hopping.

Biggest culture shock of going from UK to USA?

There was no shock. It all felt completely natural, and I just thought, "Okay, now I can ride."

What was your shining moment in freestyle?

Wall ride 360 at the first 2-Hip Meet the Street contest in San Diego. I think everyone was pretty excited about that.

What kind of rider were you?

Spontaneous and would seize the moment. I remember doing a wall ride on a moving bus mid-Manhattan on my way down to the Brooklyn Banks for the 2-Hip Street Contest. I'd slept in Washington Square Park the night before, so I didn't ride so well the following day. In the UK I was known for inverted footplants — I think they got more press than anything else in the early 80s. Nick Phillip used to call it "Campbell's Filthy Famous Foot Plant," or words to that effect.

How did you progress to learn new stuff on your bike?

By watching skateboarders.

What was the most shocking thing you ever saw on a bicycle?

It has to be seeing the footage of Ron Wilkerson hit the deck and lying there unconscious — that was pretty disturbing. Also, Hugo Gonzalez's endo drop-in to head butt at the Pipeline. Others that spring to mind are Chris Day's homemade bashguard — he used to pull a mean lip slide to revert. Craig Grasso's naked run at the 2-Hip King of Vert at Ron's house — the look on Mat Hoffman's dad's face was priceless.

What things were awkward and embarrassing for you in freestyle?

Being interviewed in public.

What is something nobody in the BMX community knew about you?

I was Benny Hill's stunt double when I was 16 — that's probably the only thing I can say that's not going to get me into trouble.

What riders do you respect and why?

This is tough, I'll try and do my best here. Brian Blyther for his fluid style and massive airs, and especially for bunnyhopping the huge drain at the end of Baldy pipe (death defying). Christian Hosoi for huge airs and super-slick style. Dave Voelker for the biggest wall rides I have ever seen and all around gnarliness. Eddie Roman, street innovator — particularly those one-hand no-foot can-can fence plants at Gardena School, and of course the one-hander lander. The San Francisco Curb Dogs, flatland/street innovators. The Gonzalez Brothers, especially Hugo's craziness. Pete Augustin, Craig Grasso, and Chris Day for the times we spent terrorizing the streets of Redondo Beach. Dennis McCoy's talent for flatland and ramp riding. Joe Johnson's killer tailwhip airs and nothings. Ron Wilkerson for getting everyone together and making it happen. Mike Dominguez's awesome air to fakies. Eddie Fiola at the Pipeline. Neil Ruffell (R.I.P.) for keeping me on my toes on the UK circuit. Jess Dyrenforth and Nick Philip, the North



JONZE

COURTESY RIDE UK

Bluebird skies over South Sea Skatepark. Craig killed it in this place back in the day.

London street pioneers. Kevin Jones for being light years ahead of everyone in the flatland scene. Mat Hoffman for the backflip on vert. The multi-talented Spike Jonze. Evel Knievel for attempting to jump the Grand Canyon on a rocket. Bob Haro, the creator.

What was your biggest reward from riding and what kind of stuff did you spend your money on?

My biggest reward from riding was influencing what the crazy cats are doing today. I feel proud to have been a part of it all. As for the financial side of things, I never actually made that much, just about enough to live on. If you're good these days you get a PlayStation game. All I managed to get was a jigsaw puzzle.

When did it start to fade for you?

1990 was a low point in BMX, and I was barely making enough money to live on. My enthusiasm began to dwindle and my interest in DJing was growing. I was going to a lot of warehouse parties in LA and decided to return to London and begin DJing professionally.

Do you have any regrets?

Quitting riding too early — I was only 21. I'm sure I still had a few years left in me. Apart from that, there isn't too much else to regret. They were some of the best years of my life.



// FRINGE REVOLUTION

CONFESSIONS OF A JAM CIRCLE JUNKIE

We were all from nowhere places, like Bakersfield, Vegas, and Tempe, with little or no freestyle "scene" at all. We'd load up our decrepit vehicles and travel for hours to contests to connect with others like ourselves. Upon arrival, we were more than ready to cut loose. At the contest site, the air was alive with energy as people poured in from their own collective nowhere places. The sweet scent of Rector rot and Simple Green filled the air, and the sessions got thick. We were all ground/street fiends, so the only place we wanted to be was in the jam circle.

To snap out a crisp combo amongst one's peers, having gone through it a million times at home in some dusty parking lot, was truly the finest feeling. Riding back into the crowd to a chorus of "fuck yeah" sent chills up the spine. Within those circles, old friends caught up as new friendships were struck. An underground current of information — riding tips, contact info, zines — was exchanged. Freshly minted tricks made their entrance into history, propelled by diverse styles. Innovative, intricately interlinked combos were too numerous to count. Laughter and foul language were constant. We didn't give a shit about the organized contest, really — everybody knew who was ripping, and respect was doled out accordingly. The jam circles splintered off into street sessions at local spots, escalating the energy and good times. All told, some of the sickest riding I have ever witnessed.

The level of goofing off, mischief, and general mayhem that ensued during those times is dumbfounding. We snuck into every event. I had a glove box full of art supplies and quickly made short work of whatever hand stamp, badge, laminate, or bracelet the event organizers could muster. We got chased by security guards, cops, and angry citizens; we hid in dumpsters, under cars, and in people's yards. We almost always ate for free. We raided convenience stores and orange groves, and stayed in Denny's for so long the waitresses gave us food just so we'd leave. We didn't pay for a stitch of clothing — small sponsorships and largely sponsored friends kept us covered in Vision Street Wear and Life's A Beach and whatever the hell else we got our hands on. We cooked up our own stickers and plastered them everywhere, screened our own shirts and hawked them for gas money, sprinted out of copy shops with our zines tucked firmly under arm. We broke down from the middle of the desert to the middle of the Bay Bridge, and overheated at every rest stop in between, stranded and fucked and laughing. We stank badly. We had more ridiculous pacts, rules, aliases, scams, and jokes than I can remember. That collective struggle was the glue that held us together. Every breakdown (mental or mechanical), flat tire, hardship, and penniless, reeking, hot road trip that had to be endured in order to get there, made our destination that much more valuable. It was constantly impossible, but it was easy. We were consumed by a simple purpose: All we had to do was show up and ride.

My best friends to this day were found in those jam circles.

—Greg Higgins (*Team Scrounge*)

COURTESY OF MAURICE MEYERS

(above) Dave Vanderspek, during the earliest days of the Golden Gate Park riding scene. Bunnyhop tabletop, 1984.
(right) Jam circle of one: Chris Lashua, laser-guided steamroller as he carves through the shadowy netherworld.
(spread) The boom years of Golden Gate Park. This was how you spent your weekends. Chris Rothe.





Participating in jam circles like this one is common if you call yourself a Golden Gate Park local. Chris Rothe.

PHOTO: WINDY



// SECRET HANDSHAKES

BEHIND THE VELVET ROPES OF CLUB HOMEBOY

One night in the fall of 1986, I made a zine called *Homeboy*. It was a shod dily assembled midnight lark, with a toxic green cover. I was paranoid I would get in trouble for expending valuable company toner and staples. My zine offered advice on how to modify one-piece cranks, a review of the Beastie Boys (pre-*Licensed To Ill*), a profile on Rockville shop legend Spike Jonze, and featured a series of stupid photos of kids who mailed *Freestylin'* seeking glory. On the back cover of the zine was a tersely-worded recruitment pitch to join something called Club Homeboy. The offer was meant to be a joke, and besides, I'd only printed 30 copies of the zine.

Fast forward a couple of months later. Ron Wilkerson was holding his first 2-Hip King of Vert contest inside an unheated barn in the dead of winter in LeSuer, Minnesota. I wanted to bring some sort of token of community to share with my peers. Another late-night session had me force-feeding crack-n-peel sticker paper into the Wizard copier. Out came a few sheets of — and I use the term loosely — stickers, featuring a bootlegged Buckwheat image with "Club Homeboy" typed along the edge. The stickers were hand cut with scissors and later distributed to the assemblage of hearty Minnesotan vert fans. A few of these little adhesive enigmas managed to stay stuck to rafters, coping, and bicycles.

A few more contests, a few more sheets of homemade stickers, and Club Homeboy was spreading like mold in the sub-basement of freestyle. Our publisher, Bob Osborn, caught wind of it, and confronted me in a fatherly way. I was sure I would get shit-canned. "Club Homeboy, huh? You guys should make it a real club."

Those words were gasoline on the fire of our imaginations. The rules were loose, the business plan was non-existent, and the foolishness was boundless.

The idea was to extend the "send buck for stickers" concept that so many BMX companies had in fine print at the bottom of their ads, and create something deeper. We had no idea what that was, but we were happy to make it up as we went along. We just knew we wanted it to be less complicated than the Freemasons, the Boy Scouts, or the French Foreign Legion.

Original membership was \$10 and you got a shirt, stickers, a 4-issue subscription to Loft Zine, a laminated membership card, and a plastic hospital band modified with quirky slogans, which we called a wrist-wrap. We shipped tons of them off in small cardboard boxes to random towns: Muncie, Indiana. Zellwood, Florida. Pflugerville, Texas.

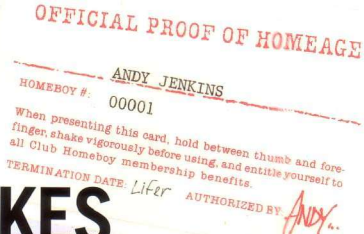
It took us a few months to realize we had accidentally tapped a universal truth: people want to belong to something (even if it's an idea based on invisible importance, and status that made fun of status).

That truth led to another discovery: packing boxes sucked. Within a year our ranks had swollen to 10,000 card-carrying members. Our product line included patches, several types of stickers, a plethora of shirts and, God help us, black wool berets.

Andy and I were at our Club Homebest cooking up sticker and shirt ideas, hanging out, networking with zine dudes and giving away stuff to our friends. As businessmen, we were not shrewd. Compounding matters, the sport of freestyle had exploded and *Freestylin'* was getting huge. Oh, and we began plotting a new youth culture magazine called *Homeboy*.



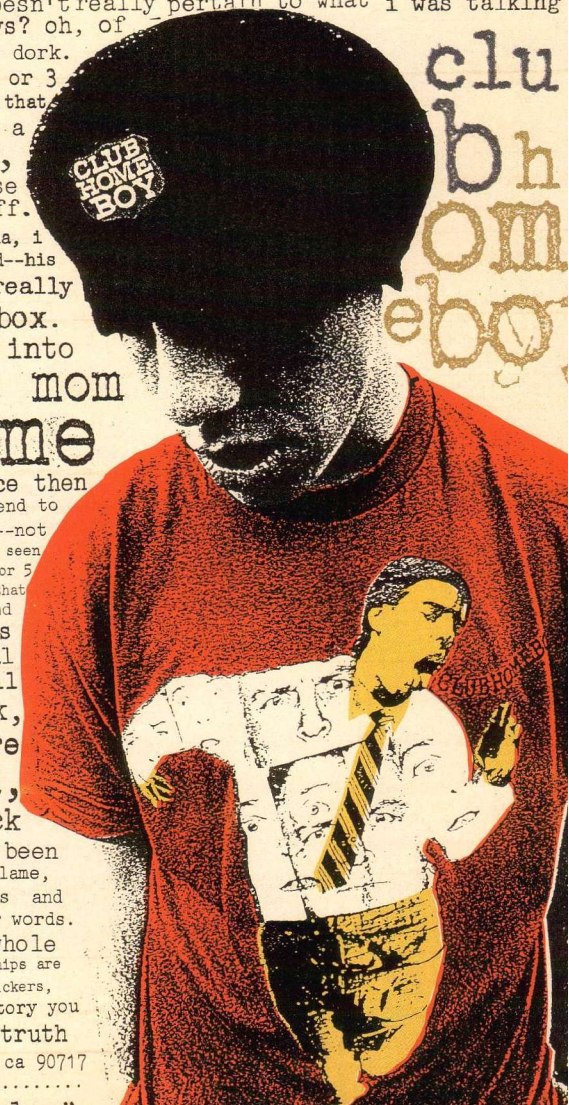
Ceppie Maes' microbus as a blank canvas for sticker-sparking goodness.
(above) The much-labeled prototype Club Homeboy socks that never made it to market because of a government cover-up.



A DORK IN THE YARD!! *another stupid, true story by Lew.*

I had to have been about 5 when this happened...but maybe I was only 4. My aunt Lana used to babysit us in the summer while my mom was at work. It was cool at my aunt Lana's house 'cause she had a pine tree in her front yard that we used to climb in and throw pine cones at cars, play with the KISS Gene Simmons and Ace Frehley action figures...stuff like that. In fact, one time my aunt Lana was at the store or something, and we built a wooden fort in the top of that pine tree. She came home and freaked out--here were all these neighborhood kids in her front yard, the whole damn tree sagging over, and we're up in the top building a fort with old used real estate signs. Whatever, that doesn't really pertain to what I was talking about... what was I talking about anyways? Oh, of course... the dork in the yard. ~~was~~ I was the dork. The lady across the street had a kid, maybe 2 or 3 years old. He could walk but he couldn't really talk that good yet. He was also old enough to have a sandbox and a wading pool, which is why I was over ~~there~~ at his house in the first place--to play with his stuff. So the second summer I was being watched by Aunt Lana, I cruised across the street to see this 3 year old kid--his name was Mark too. But my whole plan was really to go over and play in his sandbox. So this time, as soon as I walk into his back yard, his mom recognizes me

from last summer. She hadn't seen me since then so she's all stoked and spouting off the way moms tend to do. "Hiiii maaaaark (nobody called me Lew back then--not 'til 8th grade or so). Wow, you're such a big boy now! I haven't seen you since last summer... how old are you now?" Since I'm only 4 or 5 and fresh out of kindergarten (kinnygarden), I'm kinda psyched that I've been learning the fundamentals of spelling. And I'm wanting to use 'em. So I say to this kid's mom, "yeah, you know, I've been real busy with school and all that. I can spell now, check it out; mark, m-a-r-k, man, m-a-n, and, a-n-d." I figure she was pretty impressed, but you know, now that I look back on the whole thing, I realize I must've been a real moron as a kid. I guess I'm probably still lame, only now I do something besides build tree forts and rattle off the spelling of ~~three~~ three letter words. Like tell you that Club Homeboy has a whole line of new t-shirts out and more on the way. And that memberships are still \$15 a year (get a shirt, subscription to LOFT zine, stickers, wristwrap, I.D. badge). So maybe if you liked the story you'll like Club Homeboy. To tell you the truth CHB is better than this story. P.O. box 849 Lomita, CA 90717 foreigners add \$5 for postage. Specify shirt size.....





We hired RL Osborn's sister-in-law, Megan Baltimore. She'd just quit her job at a novelty shop after being held up in a robbery. She was looking for a gig less dangerous. Meg was enthusiastic, organized, creative. She ran a smooth ship, liked to laugh at us, and drove a Suzuki Samurai which was often loaded up to the top of the windows with cardboard membership kit boxes. She would later be hired away by Steve Rocco when he started World Industries. Megan has probably sold more skateboard products over the phone than anyone in history.

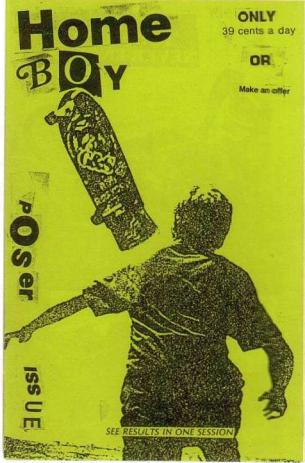
Our T-shirt silkscreener and supplier of advice for how to get good deals on cotton products was an artist and a first-generation Orange County punk rock guru named Bad Otis, aka Greg Link. Trips to retrieve batches of shirts from Greg were awesome because he had an endless stream of great stories, fine taste in music, and a house totally overgrown with amazing art.

Somewhere in the thick of all this we also acquired Spike as a Wizard employee, and beyond his editorial duties he was sworn in/shanghaied to help pack boxes, shoot ads, and contribute to Club Homeboy's official vessel of communication, *Loft*. One of Spike's first creations was the Chuck Brown T-shirt, the yellow one with the Charles Schultz-inspired black zig-zag. The Chuck Brown model's popularity was supersized when the shirt appeared in a music video by the South American funk-hop band Urban Dance Squad.

It was all too good to last.

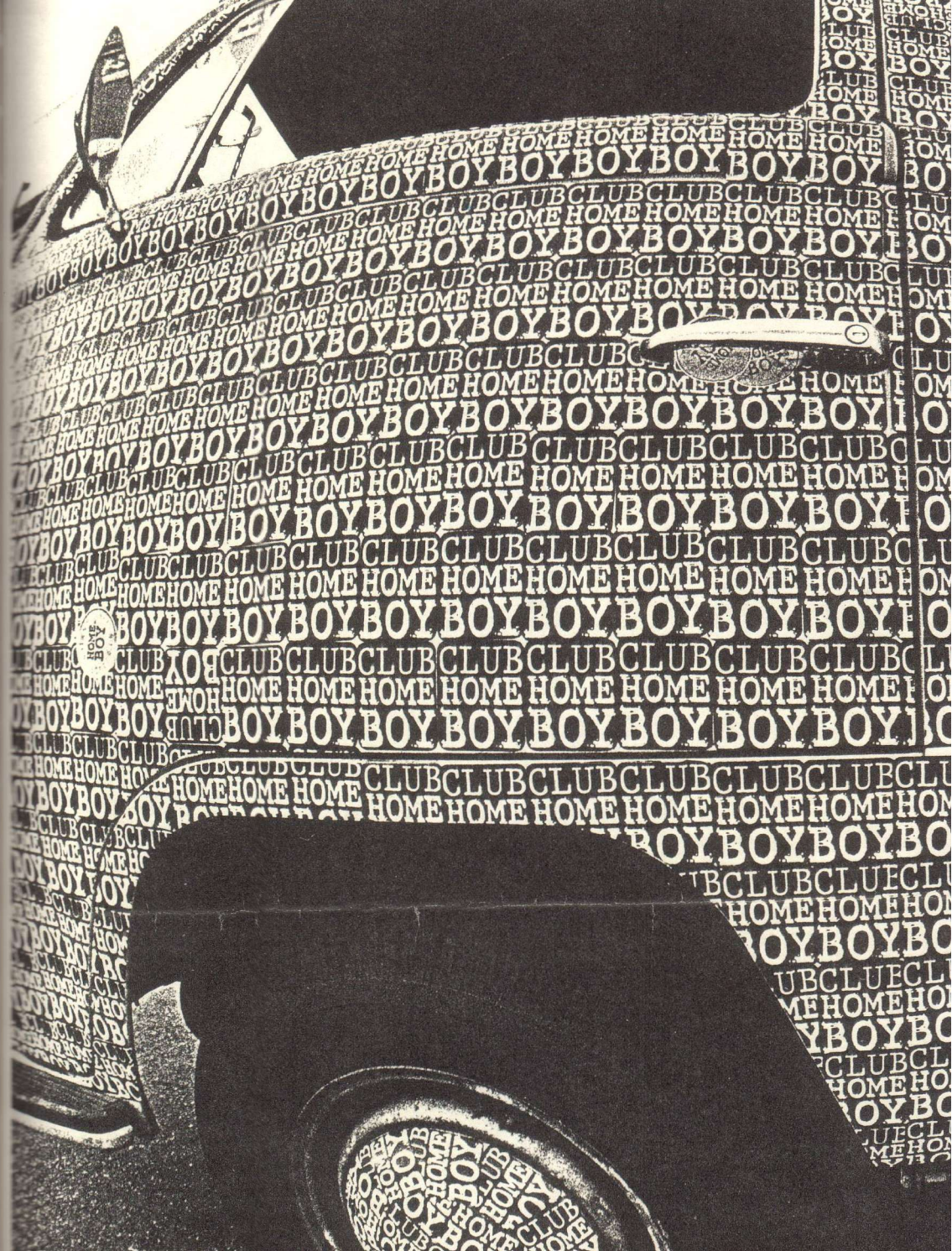
The currents of change swept through the bike industry, and in turn, affected life at Wizard publications. *Homeboy* magazine folded, and Club Homeboy (at one point nearly 15,000 members strong) would soon shrivel without a central freestyle scene.

If you ever consider starting a mail-order lifestyle cult of your own, this is the advice I have for you: don't expect to get loaded. The best perks we received were an endless supply of stickers to toss, jive to loft, and shirts to share with friends. As figureheads, we were idiots, pumped up on fun. We'd turned nothingness into a bond of brotherhood, a sort of something that connected us with like-minded freaks. That's all we got. But then again, what more could we ask for?



(top) Ceppie Maes and Nick Philip taking things a step too far. Again.
Lew's original issue of Homeboy zine which started the whole thing rolling.

WINDY



// THE XEROX WAS OUR X-BOX

EVERY WEEK, A FEW HAND-CRAFTED PAMPHLETS WOULD ARRIVE IN THE MAIL BINS OF *FREESTYLIN'*

We read every one, saved most, and traded our own Xeroxed creations with a few of our new mail-pals. They inspired us by saying we inspired them. Many a night was recklessly spent operating a copy machine, hopped up on Mountain Dew at 2:00am, smearing your face on the scanning bed or painstakingly zooming into a photo, lost in the mad science of experimental print.

At first, zines were a rarity, then they became almost a cliché. Every scene had a zine, and anybody could be a Xerox Star, so it seemed like everybody did. But however primitive or amateur or awkward, all these zines were honest.

And nothing's more awesome than awkward honesty.

Honest.

—Lew (*Homeboy, Chariot of the Ninja*)

WHAT WERE THE PERKS OF BEING A ZINEGUY BACK IN THE MID-80S?

Well, hate to say it, but promoting one's self, friends, and sponsors was definitely part of it.

—Kevin Foss (*Freestyle Today*)

It got me unbelievable access to the top tier of riders, magazine publishers, and scenesters at the time. At first I was just a kid who happened to live in a town with one of the best skateparks in the world (Pipeline). Then I put out a fanzine emulating the glossy newsstand bike rags—and before I knew it, I was mingling with my childhood heroes. It also gave me the great feeling that I was contributing something meaningful. I was a small part of American youth culture history in the 1980s—no matter how obscure and relatively meaningless.

—Bill Batchelor (*Tricks 'N More*)

The biggest perk for me was being asked to contribute to *Freestylin'*. That was The Shit. As cool as it was to make your own zine, getting something printed in *Freestylin'* was infinitely cooler. Andy requested permission to reprint an editorial I'd published in *Aggro Rag*. It was called "A Puppet No More" and ran in an "Off the Deep End" with a photo of my favorite rider, Ceppie Maes. I think it won a design award. Lew assigned me to cover a few AFA contests like Wayne, New Jersey, which Lew actually covered for *Aggro Rag*! That says a lot right there. Wizard couldn't send him due to budget constraints so he paid for his own flight, entered 19 & Over Expert Flatland, and wrote about it for my zine.

—Mike Daily (*Aggro Rag*)

The main perk was getting sponsored. First, by a local bike shop in Elk Grove, California called Hubs & Wheels. A little while later by Mongoose — as in, a free frame for Dizz, via Russ Okawa. And eventually, the CW deal.

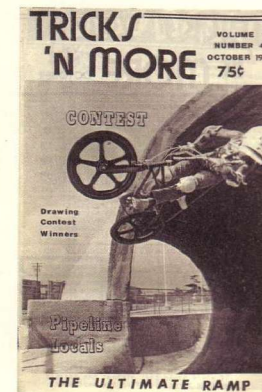
—Craig "Gork" Barrette (*The Bogmaster*)

Coming home after school to a mailbox crammed with fat bubble-packed envelopes that smelled of vinyl and ink stuffed with stickers, t-shirts, and music was by far my favorite perk.

—Luke Strahota (*Jargon of Delinquents*)

I guess the main thing zine-making got me back in the '80s was a sort of youthful respect and recognition from my freestyling peers. Not in any kind of authoritative way, but more in a "Hey man, what's up? Dig your rag, check out our scene..." kinda way. It gave me an excuse to talk to people and find new things, and ask stupid and annoying questions, which I might have been too shy to ask

"ZINES ARE THE REASON I CAN TALK ABOUT ALEXY BRODOVICH, MAD DOG MOELLER, ROLLING PERVERTED DECADES AND THE DEAD KENNEDYS IN THE SAME SENTENCE."



if I didn't wield the mighty badge of the Zineguy. Come to think of it, asking annoying questions and then writing about it was some of the best stuff I got to do back then.

—Dave Fox (*Stylin' Zine*)

The people that I got to know. Ours was the pre-web BMX network.

—Roy Christopher (*Front Wheel Drive*)

For a period of four years, it took me out of the small-town world of Elyria, Ohio [pop. 30,000]. Music, bike riding, skating, photography, and doing my zine were a way out. I probably didn't realize it at the time, but it kept me out of jail. Instead, I found myself going to exciting places like Flint, Michigan, and Woodward, Pennsylvania...somehow these places seemed like a Mecca for what we did. And I generally had better taste in music than the rest of my friends.

—Todd Sines (*Local Action*)

Mail could change my whole mood after a shitty day at school. And letters...short or long, I can't remember the last time I wrote a letter on paper and mailed it. The mix tapes were excellent as well—people you'd never met in person sending you 90-minute TDKs of really good music. The mixtape is dead, in favor of the somewhat soulless mix CD, which can be thrown together in minutes instead of hours. Beyond this, the idea of hipping someone to a band via trading tapes or writing about them in your local Xeroxed zine is quaint in the internet age, where a band is over before they're discovered. There was also a low-level notoriety to making a zine, which was a nice kind of (non)fame. People respected the fact that you'd done something.

—Duncan Scott Davidson, aka The Swami (*Gus*)

The biggest for me was the honor of shooting photos on top of the ramp at KOV contests. I don't know how official any of that was, but I'll take it. And the mail, the mail was INSANE! I loved coming home from school to see what my mailbox had harvested from all over the world. Rad art submissions from some of my favorite underground artists like Guav and Alberto Kroeger. As a ziner you could get interviews out of your favorite riders, which was an ultimate fan gig. I'll never forget the envelope of stickers, art, and pure California I'd get from Grasso. It kept this Kentucky kid feeling part of the dream. Riding changed my life and gave me a focus that I could be proud of in my frustrated youth. Zines allowed me to sort of show off like freestyle itself did. I got to sport my creativity with no restrictions.

—Pat Richardson, aka Fetus (*Rogue*)

Atomic Circle of Chaos started after I injured my hand in a freak hedge trimmer accident (don't ask). I couldn't ride my bike for a month or so. During summer. Seemed like forever. While I was recuperating, our little riding group decided to go into publishing. It was a lot of work and you always lost money. But zines connected us. They spread the word about local riders and events. They got us psyched. They spread gossip. They were real, and awesome, and embarrassing, and funny, and hardcore. Plus, you got a helluva lot of mail from friends and strangers — and I loved getting mail.

—Bill Keaggy (*Atomic Circle of Chaos*)

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

I guess it instilled in me a curiosity in other people's stories, to look beyond the ordinary for something unique in the hopes of finding a diamond in the rough.

—Kevin Foss (*Freestyle Today*)

Try to produce more than you consume. It's much more rewarding. Zine publishing—whether it was about freestyle BMX, skateboarding, punk rock or art in general—was the ultimate DIY project. The complete independence that comes with FREEDOM OF THOUGHT is the most liberating form of therapy I know.

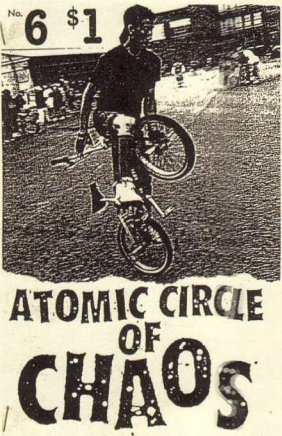
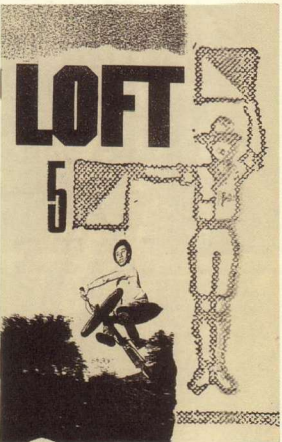
—Bill Batchelor (*Tricks 'N More*)

I learned that I'm an archivist at heart. That's what it's called. That's what I call it. Archivalism. Search "Mike Daily" on YouTube.

—Mike Daily (*Aggro Rag*)

Making *The Bogmaster* on my dad's Commodore-64 with a lame dot-matrix printer was my first typing experience. Since then, it's given me nearly four decades of being a BMX storyteller, and what I hope will be a lifetime career in the bike industry. It's pretty incredible to credit it to six legal-size pages stapled together and \$20 worth of stamps. Well worth the money, when I look back on it now.

—Craig "Gork" Barrette (*The Bogmaster*)



Although I didn't know it at the time, it empowered me to just follow my instincts without any concern for what other people might think. I would just walk up to my BMX or rock and roll idols, people who I never dreamt I would actually meet one day, and approach them for an interview. I honestly don't think I could do that today. I think this naïveté and tenacity helped me gain a better understanding of people and gave me the confidence to become a musician and perform in front of people. There were times when people would make fun of my zine, point out terrible spelling and grammatical mistakes, or just tell me it was stupid and it made me look like a fool. Although it messed with my confidence, there was something that made me keep going and try to do better in the next issue. There was still a mindset of just producing something that I felt passionately about, and if I had to learn later that I goofed something up, I'd fix it the next time around. All my best lessons have been learned by public humiliation and sometimes not-so-positive feedback, but it's all part of being creative and producing your passions.

—Luke Strahota (*Jargon of Delinquents*)

I learned that I can do my own thing. I can be my own boss, run my own world the way I want to. I learned more about publishing doing *Stylin' Zine* than I did in the four years I spent in college studying journalism. They basically taught from an idiot's point of view and, unluckily for me, I didn't realize they were trying to teach me what I already knew 'til the end of my college career. I've yet to be able to let go of that freedom of adventure that I grew accustomed to as a BMX freestyler/zine maker. My interests are different now, but I still live my life how I want. That's the biggest thing I learned and could never give up.

—Dave Fox (*Stylin' Zine*)

It's where I learned how to turn events and interviews into pages with staples. Those first issues were the first steps on a path I still follow.

—Roy Christopher (*Front Wheel Drive*)

It taught me an admiration of talent across the world in all forms, not just what was in our own backyard but other people's as well. It was a window to culture and society that I had only imagined before. I learned how to type and cut my fingers on X-acto blades and get my fingers sticky like a real man.

—Todd Sines (*Local Action*)

Oh God, what did I learn? My friend Maria often says, "There's a plug for every socket." It's not just a romantic truism, but an artistic one. If you stay true to yourself and put something out there, there will be an audience. I learned that there are real people in the world, all over the place, and the challenge is to connect instead of isolate.

—Duncan Scott Davidson, aka The Swami (*Gus*)

Zines taught me networking back when there was no name for it. It showed me how art could reach out from any part of the world and still be effective. If it's good. Which positively inspires the music and art that I create today.

—Pat Richardson, aka Fetus (*Rogue*)

I'm a terrible conversationalist. I just flat-out suck at it. Zines taught me that I could say a lot in other ways. It connected me to amazing zine makers like Todd Sines, Luke Strahota, Alberto Kroeger, the Swami, Guav, Bart de Jong, Greg Mobley, Kieran Chapman, Andy Zalan, and lots and lots of others.

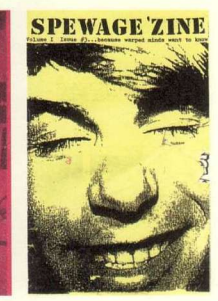
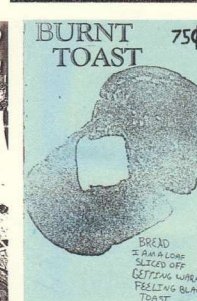
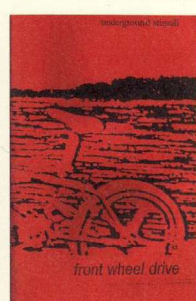
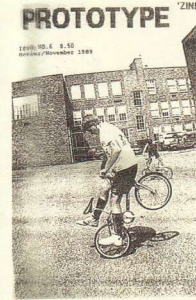
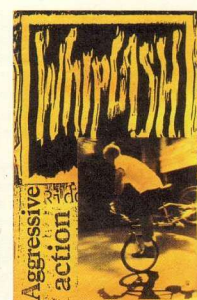
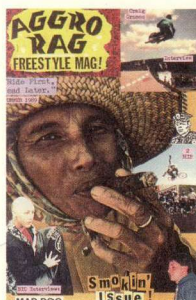
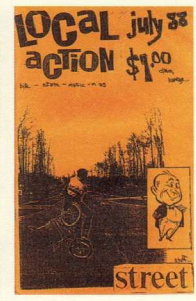
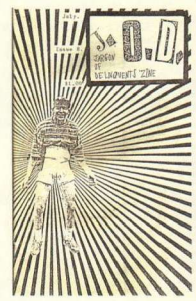
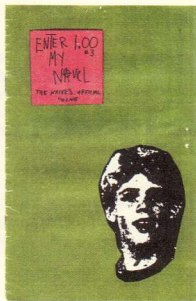
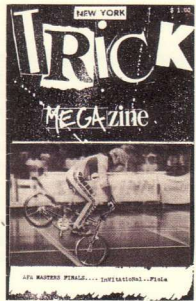
—Bill Keaggy (*Atomic Circle of Chaos*)

WHAT DOORWAYS/OPPORTUNITIES DID PUBLISHING A ZINE OPEN FOR YOU AS A CREATIVE PERSON?

My favorite zines were Mike Daily's *Aggro Rag* for his writings and Bill Batchelor's *Tricks 'N More* for the coverage of the Pipeline skatepark. We combined all three zines into the mega zine *Shreddin'* to cover the U.S. It was really good, even though it lasted for just one issue.

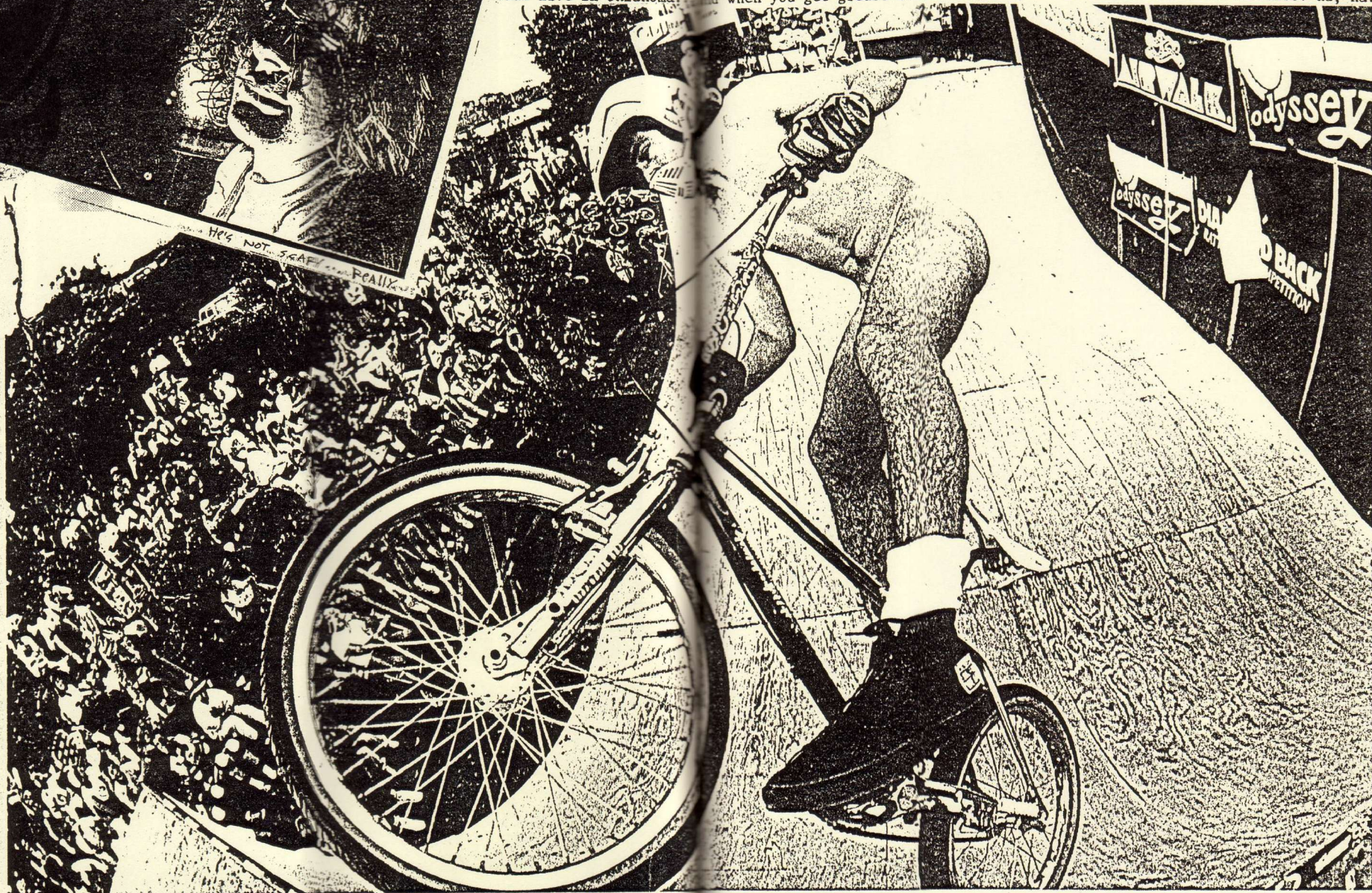
—Kevin Foss (*Freestyle Today*)

"I WAS A SMALL PART OF AMERICAN YOUTH CULTURE HISTORY IN THE '80S — NO MATTER HOW OBSCURE AND RELATIVELY MEANINGLESS."



WHAT OFFENDS YOU?

grasso: a lot of things offend me dude. what offends me the most? YOU know what offends me the most--parents that live in oklahoma. and when you get grease stuck between your teeth. and let's see...crabs. ha, ha.



oh my, he's not clothed. so what. FOR MONEY? NOT REALLY... W.C.

WHAT MAKES YOU JOYFUL?

the little man on top of palm trees... palm trees look like they have little green men on them

You have to out-do yourself — and that pressure can expedite the learning curve and make you sharper. I think it helped me mature quicker than my peers. They were farting around being young teens, and I was worried about deadlines, paying the printer, and proofreading. Most importantly, if I hadn't made the BMX zines, I wouldn't have made the punk rock zines or corresponded with someone in Lafayette, Louisiana named "Maggot." Maggot started contributing photos of touring hardcore bands to my zine, and we traded letters over the years. Eventually we met, I realized her name was Margaret, and we've been together almost 20 years now and have two kids.

—Bill Batchelor (*Tricks 'N More*)

When *BMX Action* and *Freestylin'* merged into *GO: The Rider's Manual* at the end of '89, Wizard offered me a job as Assistant Editor. My dad said I'd "starve in the streets" for what I'd be making initially, but I didn't care. I had to do it. I was 22 years old. I was fulfilling my dream to live in SoCal where it all started and work for Wizard Publications, Inc. Producing a magazine in those days was a lot like making a zine, I found. The art department had drafting tables, T-squares, a "waxer," and burnishers for pasting down copy. Computers were used for word-processing only.

—Mike Daily (*Aggro Rag*)

It put my name and writing in front of some key people, like the guys at Wizard Pubs. Eventually, it led to my name coming up in a conversation as a replacement for Steve Giberson as Editor of *BMXA*. So really, *The Bogmaster* got me started on a career path like a college degree does for some people. Only my zine was a heck'eva lot cheaper.

—Craig "Gork" Barrette (*The Bogmaster*)

It brought the world to the remote area of Oregon where I grew up. Corresponding through the mail with other zinesters and readers around the world allowed me to feel part of something that I didn't feel in my hometown.

—Luke Strahota (*Jargon of Delinquents*)

I got to make and sell my own products: zines, t-shirts, stickers, and hold my own freestyle contests — which was always a blast. The zine brought people together, on a local level with the bikers and skaters and the whole local underground scene, and also on a national level, 'cause it inspired riders I met and led us on some cool adventures and wild times. I got to meet loads of other creative people that shared my interests and helped shaped my outlook on life.

—Dave Fox (*Stylin' Zine*)

Making a zine was always having something to send someone (e.g., friends, heroes, prospective employers, et al.) that showed them what you could do, what you were up to, and what you were into.

—Roy Christopher (*Front Wheel Drive*)

It was an outlet, a way to put something into the world that wasn't there before. I think about doing a zine every now and again, just for shits and giggles. Then it seems so weird, like if I gave one to someone, they wouldn't know what to make of it. I'd have to explain it as a concept, and end up feeling like Chaka from *Land of the Lost*: a fucking Cro-Mag in a digital age trying to cook a mastodon in the microwave. There are some cool BMX, skating, music, and lifestyle sites online, but websites are so ephemeral—content isn't around long enough to be considered temporary. I sound like a huge neo-Luddite, clutching my analog tape and copy machine pages. To be honest, I've thrown out all the tapes and I don't know where my zines are anymore—I think (hope) in a box at my mom's house. It's just hard for me to get jacked on an online underground commune. I want to hold it in my hand.

—Duncan Scott Davidson, aka The Swami (*Gus*)

Rogue was my vehicle to get recognized as an artist. I remember Wilkerson letting me know he thought my art was rad. That meant so much. It led to many t-shirt designs, 2-Hip video covers, and eventually a job at 2-Hip Bikes in San Francisco. I still work as a graphic artist.

—Pat Richardson, aka Fetus (*Rogue*)

As far as opportunities and influences go—there is no way to adequately emphasize how *ACC* and freestyle (and *Freestylin'*, without a doubt) shaped my life. "Completely" might cover it. Zines are the reason I got into design, photography, journalism, art. They're the reason I work for a kickass visual communications company. They're the reason I can talk about Alexy Brodovich, Mad Dog Moeller, rolling perverted decades, and Dead Kennedys in the same sentence. They're the reason I ended up in St. Louis married to a wonderful girl with two awesome kids. And they're why I love the web, outsider art, typography, found objects, scars, back alleys, unpopular music, ephemera, random disruptive sequences, and things made by hand.

—Bill Keaggy (*Atomic Circle of Chaos*)





// WOOD IS GOOD

THE PHYSICS OF PLYWOOD

1. The louder you yell, the higher they go.
2. Compulsory wedge ramp usage in AFA contests can be overlooked if you are Mike Dominguez, Mat Hoffman, or Dave Voelker.
3. Repeated trips to the midnight lumber store become progressively sketchier.
4. Ending a session with the words "one more run" will cause you to slam.
5. Timing x Flow x Rhythm = Pump.
6. Gravity x Risk x Studying *Head First* on a daily basis = Progress.
7. Somewhere near your house is a neighbor who complains about everything, won't hesitate to call the cops, loves writing letters to the city, and often stands around glaring with arms crossed, shaking head, and muttering. To find this person, use skillsaws and hammers.
8. Nothing's scarier than your first drop-in on a shady six-foot tall driveway quarterpipe.
9. A kinky tranny has two very different definitions.
10. Career vert riders all have jacked-up wrists and fake front teeth.

(previous page) Jon Byers clocking a 12-foot invert.
 (above) Unauthorized, hastily constructed ramp in Burke, Virginia. Spike flies while Bob Stukey shoots.
 (right) Voelker would open his AFA contest runs riding to "Back In Black." The instant the first guitar chop from Angus Young rang out the through the PA, Dave would be in this position over the quarterpipe. It looked awesome, every time.
 (following spread; left) A young man they called 'Ul Buddy back then. Dave Mirra, eager to impress, and a sign of things to come.
 (right) Chris Potts. Perverted invert.







Nobody could touch Dino DeLuca's lookback tweakage. Nobody.



Camarillo local Josh White pulling about 10 and inverting to milk a few additional inches.



Double-dutch lookdowns from Johnson and Voelker.

JONZE



// GET IN THE VAN

The perception of professional freestyle back in the mid-80s was what people saw in the magazines. Our job in print was simple: turn these guys into rock stars. Their job in the field was a little harder: live up to the hype and bring it to the people. The entire notion of showing off one's skills in front of a live audience (be it one or 100) is part of the DNA of doing daring feats on a bicycle. And so the bicycle companies, seeking affordable promotion and incentive to get shops to stock their branded products, sent their stunt-riding icons on the road to spread the word: freestyle, it's the new thing.

The typical fan standing in a sweltering bike shop parking lot waiting for the show to start was really waiting for his fantasy to be fulfilled: A top notch trick team with full fluid flow, blowing minds and looking like an ad for summer vacation, California edition. Choreographed routines, dialed bikes, and a custom van hauling a state-of-the-art ramp were the tools in which the latest moves would be demonstrated live, in a show format, delivered by the very guys who had invented the stuff. Orchestrating all that restless teenage energy was an MC, armed with only his arch wit, a cool outfit, and an endless patter of verbal zingers, quotable quips, and bicycle safety tips.

Reality? The average road warrior/team rider was living on gas station food crammed into a rolling metal box for weeks at a time. They were deprived of sleep, dealing with sunburns and ankle sprains and farting teammates, smuggling fireworks across state lines, and spending their meager per diems on long distance phone bills to irritable girlfriends who were going to drop them like a physics class, anyway. Motel, bike shop, drive, repeat.

And though I make it sound grueling and unglamorous, most veteran riders who toured in those early years all have similar reflections on it being some of the coolest formative experiences of their lives. To emerge from that hot van and face a crowd. To put your tricks to the test. To be the one creating that energy, sprinkling the very seeds of grassroots into the soil of imaginations. To be a hero, even for an hour.

(above) Even a rain day is a good day when you're on tour with your friends. Team Skyway, somewhere in the Heartland.
(right) Rick Moliterno causes the crowd to cluster in close.

COURTESY OF EDDIE ROMAN



NOSEBB



(above) Super roots. Vanderspek hops Ray Meyer in an early Curb Dogs show at Dublin Cyclery in Northern California. Who builds a half-pipe for a show? Vander did. Also, note Christian Hosoi getting ready to charge in from the back.
 (right) Wilkerson, Rockville. All-American summer classic combo.
 (following spread) Martin Apanillo, bringing it to the people in Mexico. Note the flatland surface they made for him. This is how freestyle spread, one town at a time.

KANIGHTS

WINDY







Woody in the hot seat as 5,000 onlookers give him the nod of approval.



Todd Anderson air drops some napalm on the El Toro, California military base.



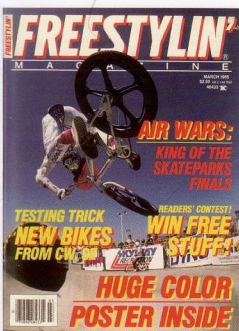
ISSUE #1 : Summer 1984
COVER : Ron Wilkerson (Oz)
FLAVOR : There's a magazine for every subculture. This is ours.



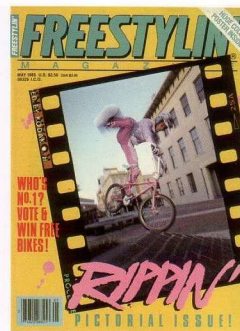
ISSUE #2 : Fall 1984
COVER : Eddie Fiola (Oz)
FLAVOR : Wood is good: word to the wedge ramps, holla at the halfpipes.



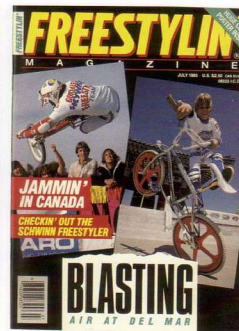
ISSUE #3 : Winter 1984
COVER : Todd Anderson (Oz)
FLAVOR : Parking lot perfection, backyard core.



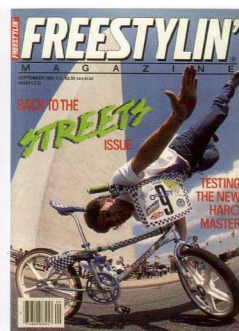
ISSUE #4 : March 1985
COVER : Rich Sigur (Oz)
FLAVOR : Doin' Shows, Droppin' Jaws.



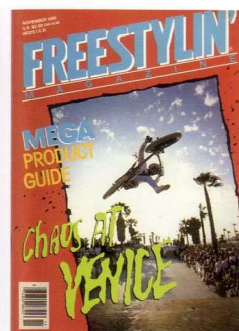
ISSUE #5 : April 1985
COVER : Woody Itson (Oz)
FLAVOR : Dawn of the Day-Glo.



ISSUE #6 : July 1985
COVER : Hugo Gonzales/Scotty Freeman (Giberson)
FLAVOR : Tuff Wheels flexing in the summer heat.



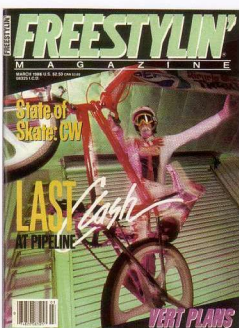
ISSUE #7 : September 1985
COVER : Nathan Bryan (Windy)
FLAVOR : We will Rockville you.



ISSUE #8 : November 1985
COVER : Michael Dominguez (Windy)
FLAVOR : Riding flatland in a fedora hat.



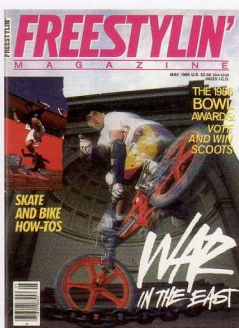
ISSUE #9 : January 1986
COVER : Eddie Fiola (Windy)
FLAVOR : Height poles and flight control.



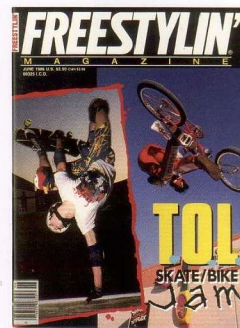
ISSUE #10 : March 1986
COVER : RL Osborn (Windy)
FLAVOR : The mag goes monthly. The sport grows weekly.



ISSUE #11 : April 1986
COVER : Martin Aparijo/Jason Jesse (Windy/Oz)
FLAVOR : Street riding in leathers. Logo seems different on this cover...



ISSUE #12 : May 1986
COVER : Dave Vanderspek/Bob Schmelzer (Windy)
FLAVOR : Skate coverage and scooter leverage.



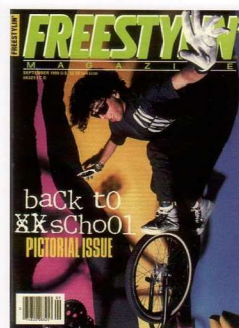
ISSUE #13 : June 1986
COVER : Jeff Kendall/Brian Blyther (Giberson/Windy)
FLAVOR : Ramp jams and body slams.



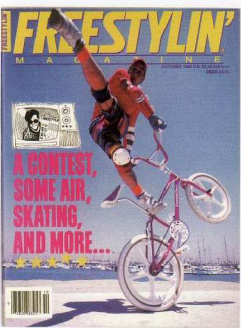
ISSUE #14 : July 1986
COVER : Tony Adams/Gator Rogowski (Windy/Giberson)
FLAVOR : Black Flag and the Olympic Velodrome.



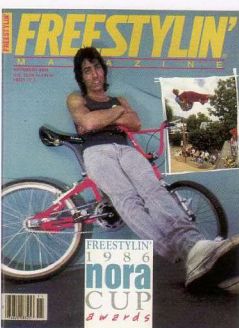
ISSUE #15 : August 1986
COVER : Josh White (Windy)
FLAVOR : White, Hosoi, Shinglehead, and Dominguez.



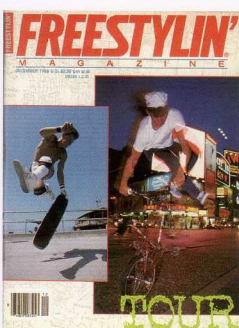
ISSUE #16 : September 1986
COVER : Ceppie Maes (Windy)
FLAVOR : When old school was high school.



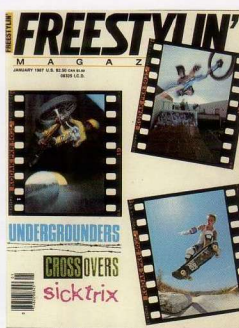
ISSUE #17 : October 1986
COVER : Pete Augustin (Windy)
FLAVOR : Gritty in pink.



ISSUE #18 : November 1986
COVER : Eddie Fiola/Eddie Reategui (Windy/Bonebag)
FLAVOR : Bloody shins and crooked grins.



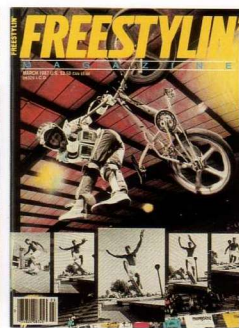
ISSUE #19 : December 1986
COVER : Rodney Mullen/Rick Moliterno (Giberson/Windy)
FLAVOR : Road trips and rogue tricks.



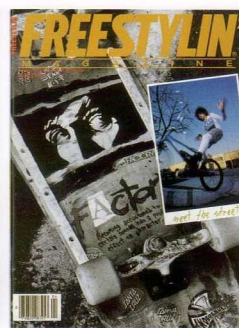
ISSUE #20 : January 1987
COVER : Eddie Fiola/Mike Dominguez/Tim Tillman (Windy/Cassimus)
FLAVOR : Dual is cool.



ISSUE #21 : February 1987
COVER : Jason Parkes/Tony Magnusson (Windy/Bonebag)
FLAVOR : Randy Tischman training circus clowns to do tailwhip jumpropos.



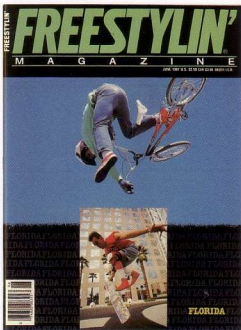
ISSUE #22 : March 1987
COVER : Mat Hoffman/Rob Maggi (Windy)
FLAVOR : Black and white and shred all over.



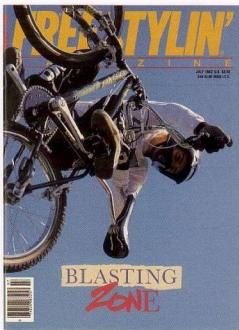
ISSUE #23 : April 1987
COVER : Andy's board/Craig Grasso (Oz/Windy)
FLAVOR : Flowing, moving, hopping, dropping.



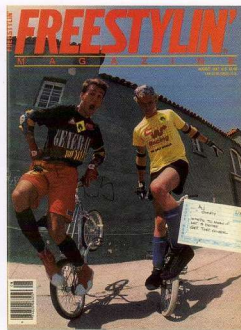
ISSUE #24 : May 1987
COVER : McCoy/words (Windy/Lew)
FLAVOR : Ride naked.



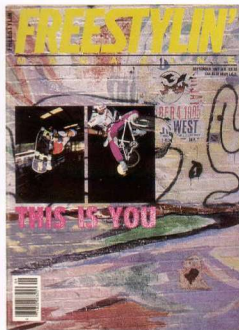
ISSUE #25 : June 1987
COVER : Brian Blyther/Don Brown (Windy)
FLAVOR : Keeping it real McCoy.



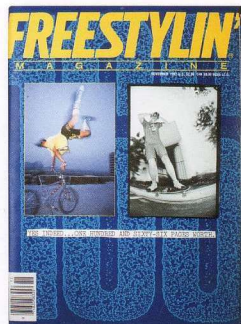
ISSUE #26 : July 1987
COVER : Dave Voelker (Windy)
FLAVOR : Flatland on full boil.



ISSUE #27 : August 1987
COVER : Pete Kearney/Gary Pollak (Windy)
FLAVOR : Scuff it up, fellas...



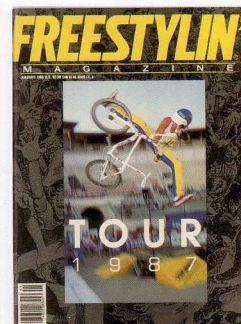
ISSUE #28 : September 1987
COVER : Marty Schlesinger/Chris Miller (Windy/Sin)
FLAVOR : Keeping Austin weird.



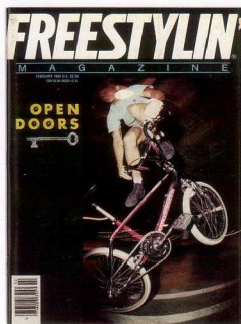
ISSUE #30 : November 1987
COVER : Nathan Shimizu/Lew (Windy/O)
FLAVOR : Contest crock pot becomes a pro pressure cooker.



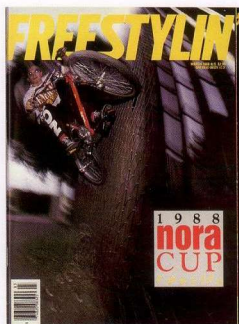
ISSUE #31 : December 1987
COVER : Chris Lashua/Tony Hawk (Windy/Sin)
FLAVOR : Rider, promoter, progresser: Ron Wilkerson.



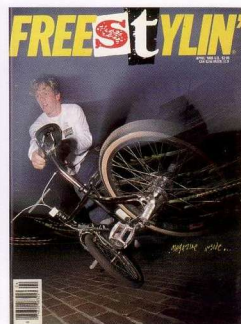
ISSUE #32 : January 1988
COVER : Josh White (Shawn Buckley)
FLAVOR : 142 pages of tour coverage (plus a few ads).



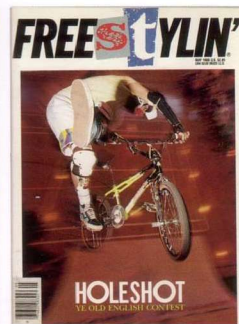
ISSUE #33 : February 1988
COVER : Rick Moliterno (Windy)
FLAVOR : Jonze joins Wizard staff.



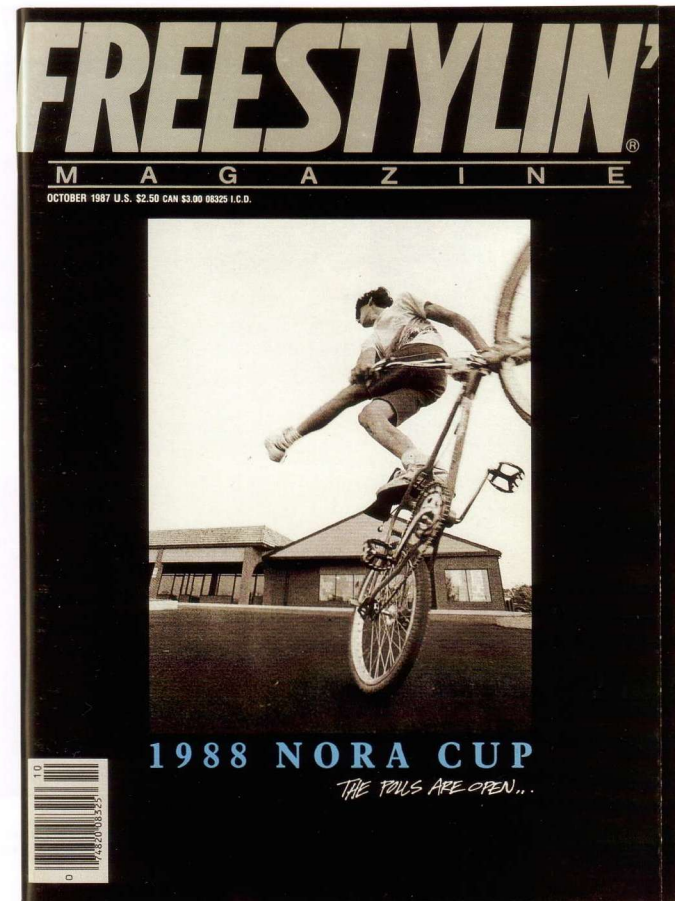
ISSUE #34 : March 1988
COVER : Craig Grasso (Windy)
FLAVOR : Multi-combo jam circle hyper links.



ISSUE #35 : April 1988
COVER : Chris Lashua (Windy)
FLAVOR : Neil Armstrong, all day long. New cover logo debuts.



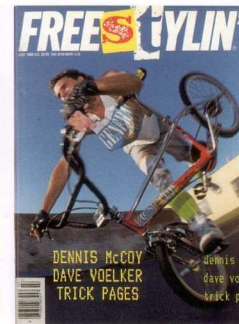
ISSUE #36 : May 1988
COVER : Chris Lashua (Windy)
FLAVOR : Wrist wraps, black berets, and Club Homeboy badges.



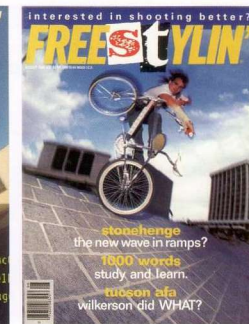
ISSUE #29 : October 1987
COVER : Mark Eaton (Bob Stukey)
FLAVOR : Freestyle sparks a fire in Flint, Michigan.



ISSUE #37 : June 1988
COVER : Chris Moeller (Spike)
FLAVOR : 172 pages of raging teenagers.



ISSUE #38 : July 1988
COVER : RL (Windy)
FLAVOR : Wall ride inventor Nick Philip gets surreal with "I AM YOU."



ISSUE #39 : August 1988
COVER : Todd Anderson (Windy)
FLAVOR : Wilkerson walks the ledge.



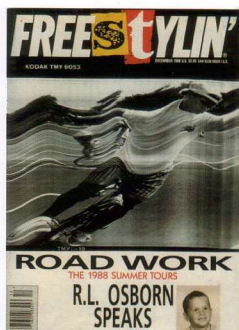
ISSUE #40 : September 1988
COVER : Eddie Roman (Windy)
FLAVOR : Subliminal message: Joe Johnson's leering head.



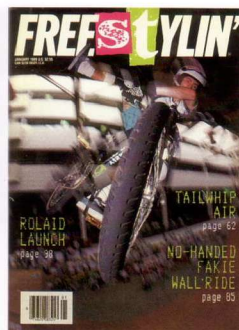
ISSUE #41 : October 1988
COVER : Kevin Slaten (Spike)
FLAVOR : Backside boneless dogs run wild in packs.



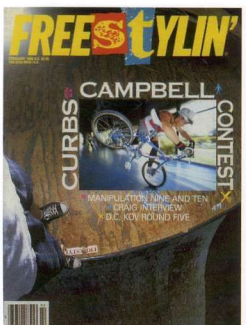
ISSUE #42 : November 1988
COVER : Josh White (Spike)
FLAVOR : Barge.



ISSUE #43 : December 1988
COVER : Martin Aparijo (Stukey)
FLAVOR : Sweaty grips, Hammer shin guards, and heat Vision mirages.



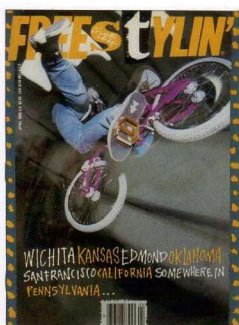
ISSUE #44 : January 1989
COVER : Brian Blyther (Spike)
FLAVOR : Street casts a dark shadow on freestyle.



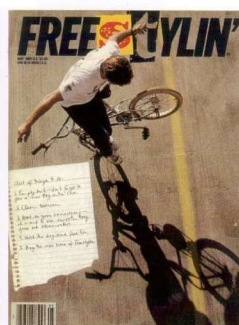
ISSUE #45 : February 1989
COVER : Spike's feet/Martin Aparijo (Spike)
FLAVOR : 116 pages thick to 76 pages thin in the span of one month.



ISSUE #46 : March 1989
COVER : Ron Wilkerson (Spike)
FLAVOR : "Just ride" is the new mantra.



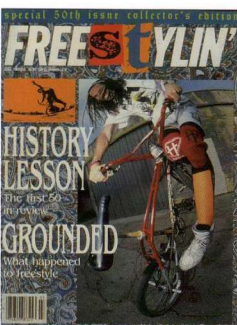
ISSUE #47 : April 1989
COVER : Gary Pollak (Spike)
FLAVOR : Don't mess with Wichita.



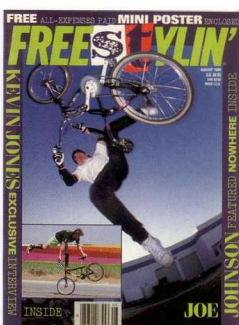
ISSUE #48 : May 1989
COVER : Kevin Jones (Spike)
FLAVOR : Elephant gliding and Ti Chi fighting.



ISSUE #49 : June 1989
COVER : Dave Voelker (Spike)
FLAVOR : Keeping it French.



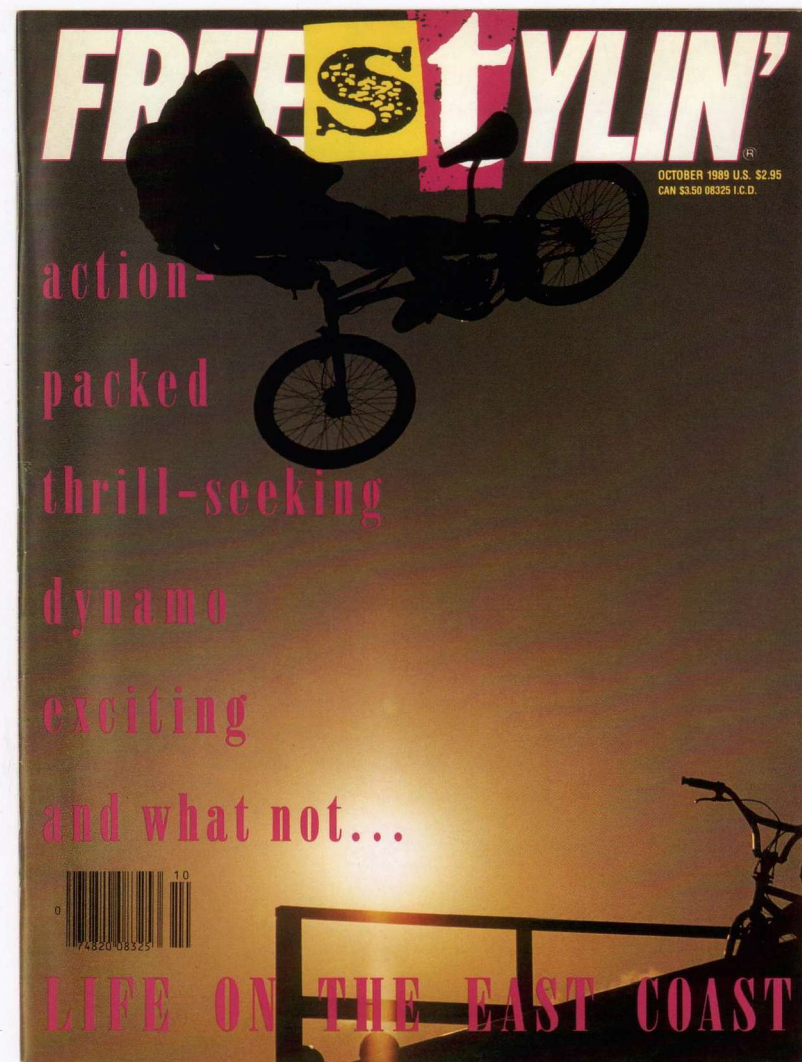
ISSUE #50 : July 1989
COVER : RL Osborn (Spike)
FLAVOR : 50 issues later, still riding strong.



ISSUE #51 : August 1989
COVER : Joe Johnson/Kevin Jones (Spike)
FLAVOR : Purple haze and rolling craze.



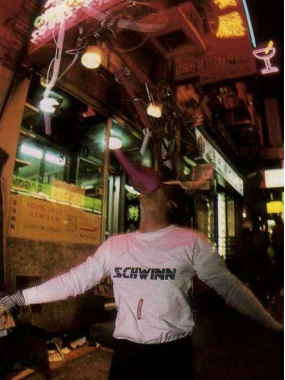
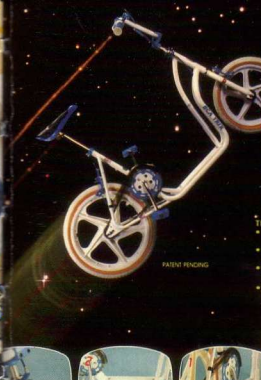
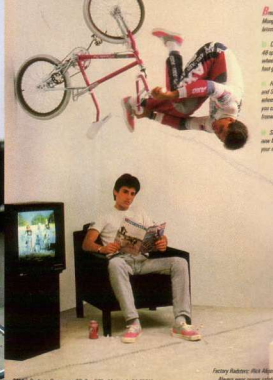
ISSUE #52 : September 1989
COVER : Ruben Castillo (Spike)
FLAVOR : Freestyle festers in the heat.



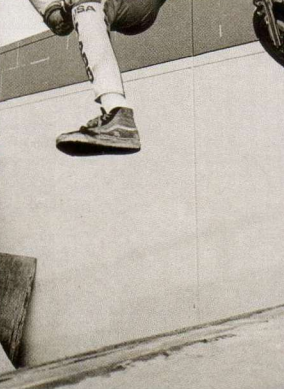
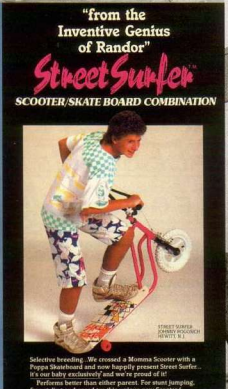
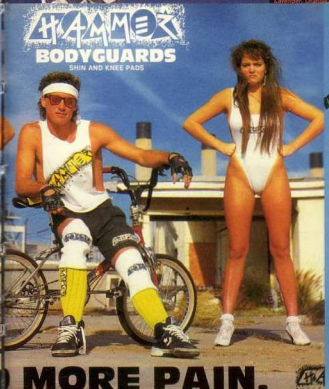
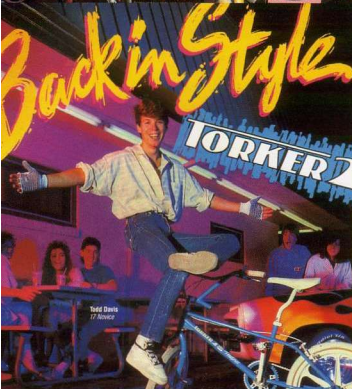
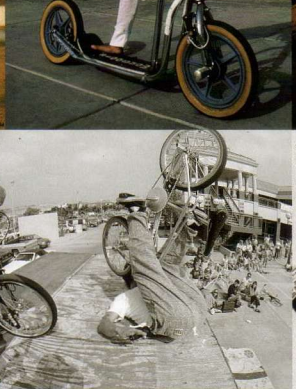
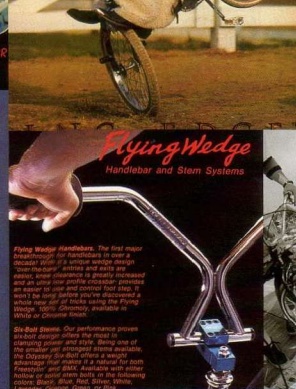
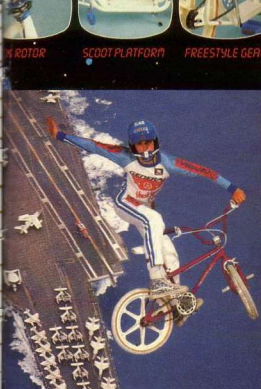
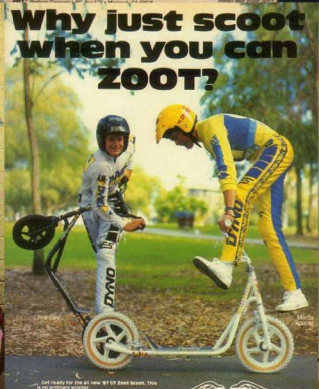
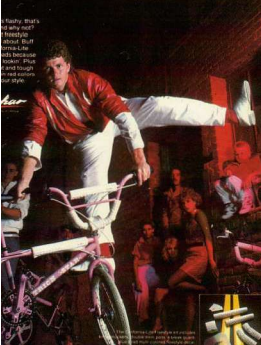
ISSUE #53 : October 1989
COVER : Brian Blyther (Spike)
FLAVOR : The sun sets on an era.

// WTF
WHAT THE FREESTYLE?





THE STREETS



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photo direction

Spike Jonze

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Eddie Roman

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...to Generation F. We were all part of something nobody can take away, or touch. It was a fun ride.

...to the new generation of BMX. You guys got this one.





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