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**Sometimes You Just Have To  
Jump At The Chance:**

**An Inspirational Interview With  
Motorcycle Legend Bob Gill**

 Michael Senoff's  
**HardToFind** Seminars.com

Dear Student,

I'm Michael Senoff, founder and CEO of [HardToFindSeminars.com](http://HardToFindSeminars.com).

For the last five years, I've interviewed the world's best business and marketing minds.

And along the way, I've created a successful home-based publishing business all from my two-car garage.

When my first child was born, he was very sick, and it was then that I knew I had to have a business that I could operate from home.

Now, my challenge is to build the world's largest free resource for online, downloadable audio business interviews.

I knew that I needed a site that contained strategies, solutions, and inside information to help you operate more efficiently

I've learned a lot in the last five years, and today I'm going to show you the skills that you need to survive.

It is my mission, to assist those that are very busy with their careers

And to really make my site different from every other audio content site on the web, I have decided to give you access to this information in a downloadable format.

Now, let's get going.

Michael Senoff

*Michael Senoff*

Founder & CEO: [www.hardtofindseminars.com](http://www.hardtofindseminars.com)

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# Sometimes You Just Have To Jump At The Chance:

## An Inspirational Interview With Motorcycle Legend Bob Gill

I recently sent out an email to my list called "Daredevil" about a childhood hero of mine named Evel Knievel, a motorcycle legend from the 70s and 80s. Little did I know that one of the people receiving my email would be Bob Gill, a fellow daredevil motorcycle legend – and former friend of Evel Knievel.

So when Bob contacted me, I jumped at the chance to interview him about his motorcycle days, the sponsorships he negotiated for himself, how he made his money, his world-famous Superbowl commercial, and his career-ending injury. And in this two-part audio, you'll hear all about Bob and how he became one of America's most amazing daredevil motorcycle jumpers of all time.

### Part One: Flying By The Seat Of His Pants

Bob says he lied his way into his first motorcycle jump. He had just started hearing about a guy named Evel Knievel, who was making good money jumping his motorcycle, and he decided he wanted to try to do that too.

So he went to the local racetrack promoter and told him he was already jumping five cars without the use of a landing ramp. The promoter was so impressed, he asked Bob to jump at a show that weekend. Instead of admitting to the lie, Bob jumped at the chance, enlisted the help of a physics-minded friend, and figured out how to make it all work.

And that was just the beginning of many opportunities for this thrill-seeker. And in Part One, you'll hear how Bob went from "no-name guy from Florida" to the guy everyone wanted to sponsor. You'll also hear...

- All about his early days on the road with Evel Knievel
- Exactly how Bob found his many successful sponsors and what he received from each
- How Bob kept racetrack owners honest when it came to "gate counts" and payments

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- The win-win deal Bob's manager used to "sell" Bob to racetrack promoters that got Bob the big bucks
- Why Bob is worried about Robbie Knievel's next jump and what he plans to do about it

Part Two: From Superbowl Spot To Second Chances  
Bob is probably best known for jumping over an entire fleet of Ryder trucks in a Superbowl VIII commercial back in 1974. And in Part Two, he gives us a behind-the-scenes look at how that was made along with some other little-known facts about the mischief and mayhem that happens on the road.

He also talks openly about the accident that left him in a wheelchair and how he deals with his disability. You'll also hear...

- The truth about Evel Knievel and what went wrong at Snake Canyon
- How Bob broke a world record and got the whole thing documented by Guinness
- Why Evel ended up in jail
- All about the jump that ended Bob's motorcycle career – and the good that came of it too
- The promising outlook for Bob's spinal cord injury – and how Evel Knievel helped him get treatment for free
- All about Bob's work with "Jump for Jesus" and the miracles he says he's experienced
- The amazing project Bob's working on right now and why he really wants to talk to Richard Branson

This is an amazing story that shows not only what it's like to be a daredevil motorcycle jumper in the 1970s, but also how important it is to jump at the opportunities in life – especially when they're disguised as challenges – and challenge yourself to always go that extra distance.

Hi I'm Michael Senoff Founder and CEO of [www.HardToFindSeminars.com](http://www.HardToFindSeminars.com). For the last five years I've interviewed the world's best business and marketing minds. Along the way I've created a successful publishing business all from home from my two car garage. When my first child was born he was very sick and it was then that I knew I had to have a business that I could operate from home. Now my challenge is to build the world's largest free resource for online downloadable MP3 audio business interviews. I knew I needed a site that contained strategies, solutions and inside angles to help you live better, to save and make more money, to stay healthier, and to get more out of life. I've learned

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a lot in the last five years and today I'm going to show you the skills you need to survive.

In 1973, daredevil legend Bob Gill jumped the entire fleet of Ryder trucks in a Super Bowl spot seen by 140 million viewers. He was the first human being to take a bike over a canyon when he soared 152 feet over Cajun Canyon, in 1972. Featured in the Guinness Book of World Records, Gill set many world records, and was the first daredevil to set a night record when he took his Kawasaki over 22 cars in Seattle, Washington. He was a golden boy, loved by the media, as well as his sponsors. Articulate and boyish, the US Navy, Kawasaki and Valvoline loved his being their spokesman because of his "Heart of America / Boy Next Door" image.

Michael: I guess what I want to start with you it's really cool that you are on my list and I sent that email out about Evel. So you wrote me back and here's what you wrote. You said *"Michael I beat all of Evel's records without the use of a landing ramp. I jumped the whole fleet of Ryder Trucks for Super Bowl VIII without a landing ramp. I set the Night time World Record at Seattle International Raceway July 17, 1973 jumping 22 cars 171 feet to a record crowd in the 1975 Guinness Book of World Records. They ran the Ryder commercial for two years in all major markets making them Number 1 in rental trucks. The commercial was listed as best action commercial of the year. I jumped Cajun Canyon in New Orleans in 1972 to a record distance. I had a near fatal crash August 25, 1974 jumping a 200 foot lake missing by three feet hitting the bank at 95 miles an hour. My career ran from 1970 to 1974 jumping 165 times with only five crashes. Evel and I were best friends. After we both retired for over 30 years I have known Robbie Knievel since he was a little boy. When I went to Evel's funeral in Butte, Montana it was 10 below 0 yet 3500 people showed up in the blowing snow. I really miss him. Now you're up to speed on Evel and I."*

I just thought that was so cool.

Bob: That's cool. I'm glad you liked it.

Michael: So why did you write me back?

Bob: Because I wasn't really sure why you sent that to me. I wasn't sure if you sent that to just me or whether you sent that to everybody because all you got to do is type my name, type in Bob Gill Daredevil, in Google and three or four pages come up. And I figured that maybe that you did that. Because see you and I had a

brief conversation and I'm sure you had no reason to remember it because I was talking about Jim Straw. See Jim sent me your little thing about the \$20 deal several months ago and I called you on the phone and I asked you and I said "I'm out of town and I have no way to pay you and I'm going back to Butte, Montana could I please send you a check when I get back?" And you said "Yes." And soon as I got back and I turned my computer on you sent me all the stuff and you said "I'm just going to trust you." And I thought that was so cool that you did that. And then when that thing when Evel came through I thought to myself "You know what he's went to Google and he's typed in some stuff and looked me up and found out that he Evel and I use to compete." That's what I really thought. I didn't know that you were addressing that to the world.

Michael: That's wild. Yeah the headline was "Daredevil." No I had no idea. So that was really cool. So let's take some of this stuff. You beat all of Evel's records without the use of a landing ramp. Wait I want to start from the beginning I heard that you were racing cars and you weren't making enough money.

Bob: I was racing motorcycles.

Michael: Oh you were racing motorcycle.

Bob: I started racing bikes when I was 14.

Michael: And were you racing competitively for money?

Bob: Oh yeah I started out and actually as a sportsman, that was what they called it back then when it was free race for a trophy. And then when I got to be, I think 16, I became a Novice which is the first year of professional racing with American Motorcycle Association and I drove to California with my mechanic. Just before I left I had one Sebring International Road Race in Sebring, Florida on the same track they run the cars on. It was the first time they'd ever run the bikes there. I won the 250 Class on a Ducati that I had built myself. I beat all their factory bikes.

Michael: Was it a Motocross type...

Bob: No road racing.

Michael: Oh so you were doing in a circle?

Bob: No. You know what the Sebring Course looks like for sports cars?

- Michael: No but is it winding and turning?
- Bob: Oh winding and turning yeah. It's like Daytona is but Daytona's got the big high banks and everything Sebring is all flat.
- Michael: Okay so you're leaning over where your knees are almost...
- Bob: Yes.
- Michael: Okay that's the kind of stuff you were doing.
- Bob: I was doing that and I was doing Scrambles which is on dirt and then Scrambles evolved into Motocross that's what they started calling it later on in the years. And I've done TT Racing which is almost like Scrambles but it's got jumps in it it's on hard clay. And like Peoria, Illinois is a really big time AMA National Championship TT Course. So I did all that kind of stuff. I did everything. I did quarter mile, half mile and miles flat track racing. So in 1964 I went to Portland, Oregon and had never road on a hill in my life. I had rode nothing but flat because I'm from the south I'm from Florida and I went out there and I got a ride with Honda and they sold me some really factory stuff and I ended up winning the specific northwest championship at Sidewinders Track and Sidewinders is on the side of a mountain. I mean it is really scary.
- But I blew the motor in my factory Honda right off the giddy up in practice and I only had one bike at the time so the motor was gone. And the dealer was there Bob Lancier, which he's a huge Honda dealer now he's gigantic he was brand new back in '64, he went back to his store and got a 250 Scrambler off the showroom floor, took the headlights and taillights off of it, put my number plates on it, poured oil in it, started it up. I won the trophy dash, I won the heat race, I won the semi and I won the main event on it.
- Michael: It was a Honda bike?
- Bob: Yeah.
- Michael: Did you see Evel jumping at one of your races?
- Bob: No actually when I found out about Evel I didn't even know what Evel Knieval was, I thought it was a bug or something. Communications back in the '60s was nothing like it is now you couldn't turn TV home and see all these great things ever going on or have all the things that we have; no internet. I remember the first time I was in Iowa and I was running down the road probably about

65 or 70 in my van with a bunch of my friends we were going to a race and all of a sudden Evel comes flying by us in this Winnebago with this flatbed trailer on it and it says "Evel Knievel" on the side of it. And I went "What in the world is that? I've never heard of that before." This was before he did Caesar's Palace in '69. So I'm wondering who in the world this Evel Knievel guy is? So anyway out in Iowa and Kansas and Missouri and all this every once in a while he would come zinging by and he drives like Mach 10. He'd be driving I bet you 85 or 90 miles an hour in that motor home and he'd go by us. And after Caesar's Palace was over with I found out who he was. I had not a clue who Evel Knievel was. That was in 1970s when I really got the bug to do that.

So like I said I lived in Florida and I came back for the winter and I got this bug in my head I said "You know what I think I can do that. I really think that I can be a motorcycle jumper." I've been a TT Racer a half mile or a road racer, Scrambler I've done this all my life. So I went out the race track and I really just wanted to kind of feel my way. Sunshine Speedway in my hometown of St. Petersburg is a real big quarter mile dirt car pave track. They do Figure 8 in there and they had a drag strip. And all of the big names that have all been in the history of all racers Don Garland and Art Malone and all the big funny car guys and all, they've all been there. So I went out there into the racetrack and I talked to this manager and Joey Chitwood is a real good friend of mine. He's a big stunt car guy he did a lot of the James Bond movies, and Chitwood used to do a lot of testing out there

So I'm out there with the race track promoter and I lied to him. I said "I've been jumping cars out in the Midwest all summer long and this is my hometown I just wondered if I could get a shot at doing it here on your racetrack on a quarter mile track and the drag strip." And he says to me "Well what have you been jumping?" So I just pulled it out of the blue sky I said "Oh I'm jumping five cars with no landing ramps." And he goes "Wow, no landing ramps." And I said "Yeah." I said "That's a little bit different than Evel Knievel", because I just started hearing about Evel Knievel.

Michael: You didn't even premeditate.

Bob: I had never done it before. I don't have any equipment for it or nothing and I'm out there on a Monday.

Michael: What was your idea you wanted to start this career and this was going to be a way in?

- Bob: Well a way in but I figured that well maybe I could get him interested and I'll go home and build some ramps and I'll do some playing around and I'll figure out how to do this and then I'll just come out here and do it.
- Michael: And he would have you when there would be an auto race.
- Bob: Yeah like a quarter mile track race on Saturday night and drag strip on Friday night. So his name is Al Lampeer. And I said Al I said "What do you think about that?" And he said "I got an idea." And I said "What is it?" He jumps up from his desk and he goes back to a desk behind him and he pulls out a drawer and throws this big book up on the top of the desk and opens it up and he says "You in for Joey Chitwood?" And I go "Well yeah, I mean from here and he's in Tampa and he's a big stockcar guy he does all the Bond movies." He says "Yeah he's supposed to be out here Friday and Saturday nights." And by the way, this is Monday I'm talking to you. And he says "He had to cancel he had to go out of town, why don't we have you here Friday night on the drag strip and Saturday night on the Oval Track?" And I go "Oh my God" I didn't want to say to him I've never done this before because I've already told him this big cockymaney story.
- So he says "How much do you charge?" And I thought to myself "Here's where I'm going to buy some time. I'm going to highball this sucker and he's not going to let me do it." So I was thinking to myself every week after racing five times a week in about a 3000 mile loop I use to make about, oh I guess maybe \$3000 dollars, that's if I won the races or got in the Top 3. So I said to him "How about \$3000 grand?" He says "Done."
- Michael: Wow.
- Bob: Oh my God.
- Michael: At this time you didn't have any idea about what Evel was doing or any of the...
- Bob: No.
- Michael: Okay. Alright keep going this is good.
- Bob: And I go home and there's this guy that lives across the street from me Frank Boyd and he goes to college, he's younger than me, he's studying external ballistics which something projected at a certain angle goes a certain distance and like you do a bullet. So I went

over to him and I said “Frank”, I said “Would you help me?” And he says “What do you need?” And I said “Well I booked a date at Sunshine Speedway Friday night and Saturday night to do a five car jump and I’ve never done it before. And I don’t have a ramp I don’t have anything I don’t know what to do.” And I said “Could you maybe help me?” He starts laughing and he said “You just what?” And I said “Yeah.” And he says “Okay.” He says “We can whip up something.”

So him and I we worked almost every night to midnight or 2:00 in the morning building ramps and doing all these crazy things and figuring out how to get the thing in my van and paint and make it look like I’ve been on it before. And we took the stuff out to a place called Wheaton Island it’s out by the Florida Power Plant and set it up in a field and put some string across where five cars would be. And I went out there and jumped until I could get over that string. And all this happened from Monday afternoon until Thursday morning when Al Lampeer wanted me out there for a press conference and he had all the media, which all the media then was ABC, NBC and CBS, that’s it.

Michael: Wait, when was the press conference? What night?

Bob: On Thursday.

Michael: Thursday. So he wanted you out there for a press conference?

Bob: Yes. Yes. So I’m out there, I man I made all kind of modifications to my bike what I think would really work suspension wise and all. I did all the mechanic work I use to build all my Daytona bikes. I know how to do this stuff but I didn’t know I was going to be under this kind of pressure. So we go out there on Thursday and we set up on a drag strip and I’d been jumping in dirt out in the field right behind the power plant. So we set the thing up and I had never jumped over cars I just jumped over string. So Al Lampeer brings out five cars which are his employees and they park them all out there, and the media is all there, and pretty soon it looks a lot further than that string was, natural things are a lot different than what jumping over air looks like.

So I said to Frank I said “Does that look like it’s about the right distance?” So he goes out there with a tape measure and measures it and he says “Yeah it’s right on the money.” He says “It’s exactly what we did at Wheaton Island.”

Michael: And how scared were you?

Bob: Oh I was scared to death. I was petrified. So the media start to hold their cameras up and the St. Pete Times were there and the Tampa Tribune was there and the Clearwater Sun was there and they all got their cameras. What they wanted to do is they wanted to run it on the newspaper, run it in the TV and he was going to buy us a commercial because the next night I was going to be jumping. So I go out there and I make a couple of speed runs by and I'm really scared.

Michael: Were you doing wheelies?

Bob: I could wheelie real well, I mean I did wheelies too, but the jump is what was really bothering me.

Michael: So did you have a speedometer? Did you know how fast you...?

Bob: No.

Michael: Did your friend help you figure out exactly how fast you needed to be going when you hit that?

Bob: He told me how fast I needed to be going and what we did is we geared my bike to where I could the full speed in third gear and we clocked it as the speed that we needed to be. So that's how I calculated what I was doing because I was riding a dirt bike. I was riding a Bultaco 250 Dirt Bike.

Michael: Who made that bike?

Bob: They were made in Spain.

Michael: Okay and that's a good bike.

Bob: Oh it's a real good bike and I used to use that for my quarter mile racing so I had it but I had to put better suspension on it.

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Michael: So you were really the main event to sell tickets and bring people out?

Bob: Oh yeah. I made a couple of speed runs in third gear and I said to Frank I said "I don't feel like I'm going fast enough I'm afraid I'm going to land on these cars. I'm going to do it in fourth gear." He

says "Well" he says "It's going to make a big difference." So I ran it up in fourth gear. I jumped over and I was still going up when I went past the fifth gear and when it come down the rear tire and the front tire both blew out. The front hub cracked and wobbled and man I landed so hard my back was killing me. I didn't fall no I did not fall I stayed on the bike. I turned it around and I came back and stopped it and they all come over to me with the cameras. And I was camera shy because I'd never done this before and it made me nervous and I tripped all over what I was saying. And it was just a terrible thing. But I did it I pulled it off.

Michael: Was that footage in the documentary on you?

Bob: The only thing that's in the documentary is the pictures of me riding the Bultaco on the rear wheel and I think there's one shot in the air but it didn't show the landing. It was at night time at the speedway but this was during the daytime.

Michael: How packed was that place?

Bob: Oh it was packed absolutely packed. Friday night and Saturday night those people were hanging from the rafters.

Michael: Now would it have been as packed if you weren't jumping?

Bob: Oh no.

Michael: How did they fill the sits before?

Bob: Friday night drag strip was always a very local thing and maybe they would pull 800 or 1000 people and we pulled about 5000 that night. The Oval track it had grandstands all on one side and it was probably be maybe half full most Saturday nights. And the place was packed and they were all lined up by the fence, the pits were full, it was unreal. I drew so well that that's where I got my start. They named me the Florida Flyer. That year I jumped 65 or 67 times and I made about \$80,000 grand.

Michael: Did you start charging more after that one?

Bob: Well yeah. I got a business manager out of South Carolina.

Michael: Okay so you did the first jump and then you got a little notoriety, newspaper articles you were kind of a star right then and then what happened after that first jump? Did your phone start ringing or did

people come to you to do stunts or did you hustle up more business?

Bob: I actually did the hustling myself at that time. I called Tampa Dragway they all knew I mean because it was on the front page of the St. Pete Times and the front page of the Tampa Tribune. I was a pretty hot ticket.

Michael: So your marketability was they bring you in they sell more seats.

Bob: Yes exactly.

Michael: That daredevil jumping that was a proven winner to pack the house.

Bob: Oh absolutely. In those days it was real good because see 1970, '74 which was my career that was the Vietnam time and the country was a mess, everybody was all stressed out about it, Nixon was the President everything was a disaster area in the economy except for what people did to relief stress. They would go to entertaining events, they would go to sports events, and they would go to races and stuff like that. So myself and Evel both we took advantage of that because we were like the new kid on the block, that's what we were I mean people come out to see us just to relieve the stress and we were packing places I mean just completely pack them. And I wasn't making any money compared to what Evel made my first year but it was a start.

Michael: How many years had he been doing the same thing before your first one?

Bob: What really got me off the ground was after my first year I jumped back at Sunshine I think I jumped Sunshine Speedway seven times and I think it was my second time that I was there or my third time, I can't remember for sure, Dave Rupp who turned out to be my business manager from Palm Beach, he was up there visiting Al Lampeer and they were good friends because he had a big racetrack in West Palm Beach was called Palm Beach International Raceway and Rupp ran out there. And he said to me after I made the jump he said "I'd sure like to have you come down there."

Michael: After your first jump.

Bob: No this was after the second or third time I did the Sunshine. I had probably made I don't know, 20, 30 jumps.

Michael: You were running the business then.

Bob: Oh yeah.

Michael: How did you approach your business manager? Did he approach you or you approach him?

Bob: Well he actually approached me originally at Sunshine to come down and do the jump and after I did it down there he had so many people come to my jump he said "Bob I want to be your manager." He said "I've never done that before" he says "But man I got the gift of gab and I know all the racetrack promoters everywhere in the south." And I said "Well heck yeah man let's do it."

Michael: And was he good at this stuff?

Bob: Ah he was very good at it.

Michael: So when you get a manager...first of all I'm sure it's a lot of work, you were running a business basically.

Bob: Oh yeah.

Michael: And so before you got your manager were you pretty busy running this business?

Bob: Well like I told you my first year I jumped 65 times.

Michael: And so you had to have a trailer, you had to have your ramps you had to invest in building this stuff. After that first jump were you practicing more so you knew the bike wouldn't break.

Bob: Let me tell you a little secret Michael I never practiced one time after I did the jump out there on Wheaton Island. Every time I jumped that motorcycle from there for four years later I never jumped until I got paid. Frank figured out all my jumps for me. He could land me within three feet of where I was getting off. When I jumped the 22 cars at Seattle I took a can of Kawasaki green paint, Kawasaki was my national sponsor, and I put a circle out there at 170 feet and I told the crowd this is where I'm going to land - because Evel lands anywhere I mean he lands somewhere within 65 feet of his landing ramp he never had any direction and he never uses a speedometer and he never used anything, he's like a seat of the pants jumper - and I was really proud of the fact that I knew where I was going. And I put a black rubber mark right in the center of that three foot circle.

Michael: It's mathematics.

Bob: Yeah. I needed to practice jump like I needed a hole in the head. I told Frank I said "If I practice jump that's how I'm going to get hurt." You know what I just thought of something I just told you a story about never practicing again. I did one more time at Sunshine Speedway on an off day I believe it was on a Thursday the date was December 4th. I went there with Cycle News - Cycle News is a really big motorcycle publication. Back in those days they were in the west coast, they were in the east and they were in the south and they were called Cycle News Dixie. And Dixie came down to do a speech or centerfold on me and they wanted me to go out there with their photographer and shoots and jumps. And I did and he shot all kinds of pictures. And we were just getting ready to put everything away he says to me, he says "I got one more idea." He said "I would like to stoop down on one of the cars and have you go over top of me and let me get a shot of that.

And we'd been doing this all day. So I said to him "No problem I can do that." I said "I'm getting kind of sore because I'd made probably six or seven jumps and I'm really tired." And he said "Well this will be the last one." Well when I went up the ramp he stood up and when he stood up he had the camera, if you could imagine him holding it in his right arm, and my footrest caught him right in the center of his right arm and broke his arm right in half.

Michael: Wow.

Bob: The camera hit the engine cases. When I hit him I did a big flip in the air and landed upside down on my head. My Bell's Star helmet broke both my collar bones, the bike bounced in the air; it came back down, handlebars in my chest, broke all my left ribs and broke my pelvic. Now there's nobody out there. Al Lampeer is at the office which was probably about three blocks away from where we were practicing at and I'm laying down there gasping for breath because I collapsed both my lungs. The photographer's knocked out, his arms broken, the camera's split wide open, and it was a 35mm motor drive. All the shots we took all day long were in that camera and they all got ruined. And my wife, luckily I was married at the time, ran full speed ahead over there and got Al Lampeer.

He called the ambulance and he called them and said "That there's a motorcycle accident at Sunshine Speedway." Well they knew that Sunshine Speedway wasn't running at that time of the day they thought it was out on the road. So the ambulance came and didn't see anything and went back. And I laid on the ground bleeding out

of my mouth gasping for air and bleeding blood for 45 minutes before the ambulance got there. And Ken the photographer was knocked out he still laid there it's a wonder it didn't kill him. And they finally took us to the hospital and they had to do what they got to do to get your lungs back going and get his arm all fixed and everything, but it was a mess. And that right then is when I said to myself you know what I'm never practicing again. That is it because I made nothing for that and I almost caused myself my career. So that's why I never did it. Even when I did big long jumps, when I jumped the 22 cars at Seattle that was a first time I'd ever done that.

Michael: Okay so what kind of deal do you make with the manager? Let's say you got good things going, you got a manager who wants to promote you, what's the negotiation?

Bob: He got 15% of what I did.

Michael: Fifteen percent of the gross.

Bob: Yes.

Michael: That's pretty fair.

Bob: Yeah.

Michael: And what was his responsibility?

Bob: To keep me busy booking me and then he wrote radio copy for me, he was really, really good. Being a racetrack promoter like he was at the racetrack he wrote off his own radio copies, though, and news stories. He knew how to do all that stuff and Rupp really put me on the map.

Michael: He wrote off a copy and then the raceways if they wanted to promote their weekend events they would use that copy to use you as a draw.

Bob: Yeah we would have a press kit. And when I first started out, as I told you I rode a Bultaco for the first year then a dealer, as a matter of fact I'm getting ready to go see this lady on my trip her name is Ms. Thelma Reeves she's 85-years-old now, she has Suzuki of Greenville South Carolina, she sponsored me from 1971 through about the end of '72 just out of her dealership there. She gave me my bike, she gave me my parts. She didn't pay me any money she didn't have any to pay me. But I actually call her today I call her my

South Carolina Momma. She's a sweetheart she is just the nicest lady. And I'm getting ready to go see her when I go on my trip.

Michael: Alright hold on I just want to stop for the business people online. She sponsored you. What is sponsorship? What was in it for her, what was in it for you and why this sponsorship work?

Bob: When I was riding the Bultaco it was all my idea. Bultaco would not sponsor me they would not give me bikes for parts. Ms. Reeves when I jumped in Greenville South Carolina at Greenville Raceway and she came over to me introduced herself to me and she said "I'm the Suzuki dealer in town and I really like what you do, I love the image that you have with the people, I would like to supply you with the bikes that you need and the parts that you need. If you're interested I'm available." And I told her I would love to that. I wanted a bigger bike anyway and she wanted to put me on a 400 Suzuki. So I did.

Michael: Did you sign documents or anything?

Bob: Oh yeah. Yeah she gave me two bikes and all the parts and whatever I needed and any type of support I needed. She was wonderful.

Michael: Okay so for you, you got support, bikes, parts, what did they get?

Bob: They got exposure Suzuki of Greenville. I mean I jumped all in the south. I was the guy that jumped in Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, and Florida, that's where the places I was pretty much booked in my early days when she signed with me. She got a lot of exposure from it.

Michael: Do you think it directly helped her sell more bikes?

Bob: She told me it did.

Michael: People wanted Suzuki's.

Bob: Yeah. She told me it did. She said "She did really well with me."

Michael: And was she only selling Suzuki?

Bob: Yeah.

Michael: Back at that time it was a dealership that only sold their brand.

- Bob: Exactly. She was Suzuki at Greenville that's what it was called.
- Michael: Alright the first year you made \$80,000 grand. Tell me about the second year. You had your sponsor the second year.
- Bob: Well that's when I had Suzuki and I had Dave Rupp. And Rupp he was booking me for a lot more money at the time and he put me on a percentage deal which I really like to do.
- Michael: Tell me about that, the money part.
- Bob: At the time Rupp got hold of me I was jumping way more than five cars. I think I was jumping 12 or 13 or 14 cars something like that.
- Michael: You started with five. What was the next one?
- Bob: I went from five to eight and then to ten.
- Michael: And just as your confidence built you went a little further and further.
- Bob: Well Frank helped me I mean he kept telling me he says "I know what I'm doing." And I believed in him I had a lot of faith in him. And he said all we have to do is increase his speed this much and angle it this much. I mean he would dial me right in it was perfect.
- Michael: The jump itself I mean none of them were any harder than the other was it?
- Bob: Well yeah. Yeah I mean without a landing ramp you land flat on the ground and later on in the year as time moved on towards the end of 1972 Kawasaki took me up and a Kawasaki factory.
- Michael: What happened with your sponsorship?
- Bob: Yeah I need to tell you that. At this point and time I picked up some pretty good sponsors and one of my sponsors was a company out of Michigan and it was called Diff Brake, D-I-F-F Brake. And what that did was when you would touch the rear brake the front brake would come on it was supposed to be a big new thing for motocross racing. What it was really bad for motocross racing. Well it was really bad for motocross because the front wheel would start sliding in the corner and the guys would go down and it wasn't really great. So the guy that owned the company, his name was Russ Shreve he said to me he said "You know I'm having some problem with motocross." And he said "I'm getting some negative

input on it but I'm doing some research and development trying to get it fixed." He said "I would like to sponsor you." And I said "Well what would you like to do for me Russ?" I was running around in a van at the time. He said "I'll buy you a brand new motor home, whatever one you want." Well Winnebago was one of the top ones back then. I said "Okay I'd like to have a Winnebago 27 foot really nice blah, blah, blah" told him all the things I wanted on it. And two or three weeks later he showed up in Dalton, Georgia where I was at jumping with the motor home at 2:00 in the morning with a great big ribbon wrapped around it.

Michael: Okay so what did you have to do with that sponsor? Did you have to use his Diff Brakes?

Bob: Yeah I used his Diff Brakes which worked great for me because then I wouldn't have to take my hands off the handlebars to pull the front brake in and get stopped.

Michael: Oh I see. Did you have to wear his logo on your helmet?

Bob: I put his logo on the motor home naturally because that's what he supplied me with and I had it also on my bike. And he used to buy full page ads every single week in Cycle News, every single week.

Michael: And you were his main sponsor.

Bob: I was a big deal for him and I made him a lot of money. I mean there's no doubt about it I made Russ a lot of money.

Michael: And so he was just a no percentage deal on what you made and it was just he gave you the motor home and you advertised him.

Bob: He advertised me I mean he made me money because he put me out in front of the world.

Michael: At that time you had Kawasaki?

Bob: I had just signed with Kawasaki and how that happened was, to tell you how I broke my relationship off Mrs. Reeves. I was riding on my to Salt Lake City I was probably, I don't know, maybe 200 miles away from Salt Lake City, I'll never forget this. And while my Winnebago was in California Russ Shreve he said "I can't ever reach you." He said "I want to put a phone in your motor home." Well back in those days in order to put a phone in a vehicle the contraption that ran the phone was as big as a bed. They had to take my bed out of the motor home, put this thing under the bed,

and put the bed back on run the wires over the front. It was like a glorified CB radio it had 16 channels on it and you would have had to look at which channel was open so you could dial out.

So this thing cost like \$10,000 grand to put in the motor home. And Russ paid it. So now I had this thing. So I'm on my way to Salt Lake City and about 200 miles out my phone rings. And I'll never forget this and I pick it out and I go "Hello" and the guy at the other end he says "Bob Gill." And I say "Yeah." He says "This is Don Wiggle." And I said "Don Wiggle that sounds really familiar." He says "Yeah" he says "I was the Suzuki rep back in Portland Oregon 1964" he says "When you were racing out there." And I says "Oh yeah, yeah, I remember you." And he says "Well I'm Kawasaki's National Sales Manager now." And he says "I know all about you." And I go "Wow that's really cool." And I said "What do you want to do?" He says "Well where are you?" I say "I'm on my way to Salt Lake City."

Michael: How old are you right now?

Bob: Twenty-six. So he says "When you get to Salt Lake City" he says "You just stop that thing and get on an airplane and fly to LA. Call me back and tell me what flight you're on", he says "I'm going to pick you up at the airport." So I said "Okay that sounds cool." So I got on an airplane, flew to LA and I'm not kidding you he laid a deal on me that was off the hook. And I don't know whether I should say this.

Michael: Yeah just say it. He wanted you bad.

Bob: Oh he wanted me real bad. And the fun part about it was even though he was a Suzuki rep and I was riding factory Hondas back him and I got to be really good friends we really hit it off real well in the pits together and we hung out and all, but I hadn't seen in many, many years. So he gets me there and he cuts me with this big contract deal and also he says "I listen to you on the media" and he said "You really sound good." He said "I like the way you say and you don't sound like you're reading it and you don't have the ums and hahs and all those things", kind of like what you were talking about. He said "I'm going to give you a really, really good incentive." And I said "What's that?" And he said "Every time that you mention Kawasaki in electronic media or in the printed media, with meaning TV or radio or newspaper, magazine, he says "I'm going to give you \$100 bucks for every time that you say that." This was 1973. And I said "You're kidding." And he says "No." And I said "Well you have never heard Kawasaki mentioned so much in

your lifetime.” I said “I’m not going to do something stupid like go Kawasaki, Kawasaki, Kawasaki, but Frank and I we practiced it riding down the road.

He’d ask me questions and he’d ask me every imaginable question you could think of and I’d always have an answer with Kawasaki in it. They’d say “Well what kind of bike do you ride?” And I said “Well I ride a factory Kawasaki.” And they say “Well how come you ride that?” And I said “Well Kawasaki Motor Corporation in Japan, not only do they make Kawasaki Motorcycles but they make Kawasaki Ships, Kawasaki Airplanes, they make Kawasaki everything.” And pretty soon my checks were like \$10,000 grand a week.

Michael: Wow and he didn’t care.

Bob: No because the money was coming from Kawasaki Industries. See Kawasaki Motorcycle Corporation is just a subsidiary of their big huge Japanese Corporation. They don’t even really care whether they make money or not with Kawasaki Motor Corporation.

Michael: Now you mentioned Suzuki. Is that right?

Bob: Yeah.

Michael: With Kawasaki under Suzuki.

Bob: No Don Wiggle use to be a road man, a road rep with Suzuki before. He switched over to Kawasaki. He worked his way all the way up to through the ranks. He managed a Kawasaki store and then he went to be a district manager and then he became an area manager and he handled that whole big east coast thing in Cherry Hill, New Jersey Kawasaki East.

Michael: Besides \$100 bucks every time you said it, what else was part of your deal?

Bob: Thousands of dollars.

Michael: Let’s say someone’s listening and they want to negotiate a sponsorship and like you’ve given a great idea, maybe that every time you mention the brand they pay you a certain amount of money, that’s something you can put into an agreement and that’s probably something a lot of sponsors offer their people right.

Bob: I've never heard anybody ever get that before because like going to Evel Days every year I talked to all these other guys and the sponsors are not anywhere near as gracious as they were with me. I mean they weren't even close. These guys paid me money like it was going out of style. It was insane. They loved me. They would have me go around to all the motorcycle shows and go in and sign autographs and they would advertise me and put me on the marquee.

Michael: Was their money in that?

Bob: Oh yeah.

Michael: Tell me where the money is with sponsorship. So just don't tell me how much but where else can you earn income. You're the star, you're packing these stadiums, you're making these sponsorships money I mean the attention's on you, and show me the money, where's the money. So if you went and negotiated a sponsorship today, learning everything you know in the past, what are you going to ask for?

Bob: In today's world.

Michael: Tell me how your deal was back then and then maybe we can talk about in today's world.

Bob: Let me tell you the way that Kawasaki thing went down. I didn't negotiate the deal they offered me a deal that I couldn't turn down. And they had no idea what I was getting with Suzuki they had not a clue where I was coming from with that and they just shot a big number at me and I go "Well Don yeah, I'm very interested in that." And I said "What kind of support am I going to have with the bikes and all?" He says "Man I'll give you carte blanche to anything that you want in this country. Go by any distributorship and sign your name, pick up any bikes you want, new bikes, in a box, you want to give them away at the jump we can do that. Any time you want parts, you want a bike to ride on the street, I don't care what you want man you just sign your name and everybody will know who you are."

Michael: Was your manager still in on this?

Bob: Oh yeah, but he didn't negotiate this deal for me I did it on my own.

Michael: Alright and that was cool with him?

- Bob: Yeah it was cool with him.
- Michael: He still got 15% right.
- Bob: Well yeah.
- Michael: Did you travel with your manager?
- Bob: He traveled with me if I needed him he was like on call. He was lived right at the airport in Palm Beach and if I needed him for anything, like when I did that Canyon jump in New Orleans I had a problem with the media. They didn't really want to give me any coverage and I couldn't figure out why and I called Rupp up and he says "Well I'll be right there." He went to the airport and got a plane to New Orleans. And he went with me to the media and I learned so much from him it was unreal. I was very naïve back then. I mean I couldn't even talk to you like I'm talking to you now. I knew nothing about what I was doing.
- Michael: Did your wife travel with you?
- Bob: Sometimes.
- Michael: Sometimes. So you were mainly on your own?
- Bob: Yeah pretty much on my own.
- Michael: Alright so we're talking about how the deal went down. You got anything you wanted you got \$100 bucks for every time you said "Kawasaki." What else?
- Bob: I got a big chunk of money in the beginning like a signing bonus and if I wouldn't have got hurt it would have been gigantic. Well let me tell you why they fell in love with me. When I did the 22 car jump in Seattle the United States Navy came over to me, one of the commanding officers and there was only Bill Muncey the ocean racer guy, Don Garlits the big superstar drag racer guy and they were the only two that the United States Navy was sponsoring. And they came up to me and they said "We really like what you do." And my whole thing was Fly with Me that's what I use to put on the back of my helmet. And they said "We would like to put Fly Navy on the back of your helmet. And I thought to myself "You know this is going to be a huge credibility thing."
- Now one thing about the Navy back then it wasn't a money deal they didn't have any money allocated from Congress like they do

now. Now they have like about \$20 million dollars a year that they can play with but back then it was totally credibility. It was like to be sponsored by the United States Navy was like an honor. Kawasaki being married to me with that tapping was unreal. So one thing the Navy wanted me to do they wanted me to go around to colleges and high schools and talk to the kids in high school and college about my career and do safety classes. Kawasaki got involved with that they made me a safety film up so that was like 15 minutes long and I'll tell you exactly how the thing would go down. They would have all the kids in the auditorium.

The United States Navy would go out there with their flags to dress real well and they would stand in the front and one of them would introduce me. And they would say "We would like to introduce Bill Gill a World Champion Motorcycle Jumper blah, blah, blah, whatever they'd say and he wants to talk to you and tell you about motorcycle safety." And they would bring me out and I would start talking. I never once, and they didn't want me to, never one time did I say anything about you guys need to join the Navy, the Navy's really cool. I never said that once. They stood next to me with their uniforms on.

Michael: It was implied.

Bob: It was implied. So I traveled around the country and I'm doing these things. I went to Shriner's Hospital. I even went to some prisons and did this. I mean we did things that no one in the motorcycle jumping world ever did. I mean Evel never did nothing like that. I mean he was all about money if you weren't paying he didn't want to do it. But I could see down the road that this was an association that was being made in Heaven and it was really good.

Michael: With the Navy you agreed to it same thing you had to sign paperwork with them on all of that.

Bob: The paperwork with it and they had their recruiters and all my junk and they would just stand around and look really cool and handout literature and all. But let me tell you the good news about that whole thing, after a year went by I got a letter from Admiral Tibbs. Admiral Tibbs was the Admiral in charge of recruiting and he said to me he said "Bob, I'm so proud to have you part of the team with Don Garlits and Bill Muncy." He says "We're having a big meeting up here in Washington, D.C. and we want you to be here and we want to fly you and your wife in. We've got some really neat things we want to talk to you about." So I thought oh wow this is really cool. I'm really making points I must be doing something right.

So they fly us to Washington we go in there and four of the Blue Angels were there, Garlits was there, Muncey was there and Admiral Tibbs and myself and Jan my girl. So he gave me a plaque he says "I want to tell you" he says "Every city that you went into, every major market that you went into you pulled more people into the Navy than all our recruiters combined." He said "Nobody has ever recruited as many people as you have recruited." And he says "How did you do that?" I said "I didn't do anything. I didn't say anything about it I just brought the Navy along because evidently he was in the dark about it." And I said "No." I said "That was the game plan." I said "It's supposed to be an association only." So Kawasaki got a lot of miles out of it because we're showing Kawasaki films through kids that are in high school, kids that are in college, and the Navy got the recruiting that they wanted, they gave me this beautiful plaque.

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Michael: Alright I got a question. You're already entrenched with Kawasaki, Navy approaches you how do you handle that? Do you think maybe Kawasaki may not be into this? Are you scared to say something? I mean where's the limit? I mean obviously a sports figure wants as many endorsements and deals as possible but do you have to think about your other endorsement partners?

Bob: You want to make sure you're not dealing with any conflicting situations.

Michael: So it's all got to be non-competing.

Bob: Absolutely.

Michael: Yeah like if you went with Honda that won't work but Kawasaki looked at it as a benefit because Kawasaki could ride on that credibility too.

Bob: Absolutely. See the responses that I had were non-competitive with anybody. After a while I got Winnebago Industry. I told you they Russ Shreve but Winnebago jumped right on the bandwagon. They gave me a brand new coach that was actually off the hook. So I had Winnebago, I had Valvoline Motor Oil.

Bob: So let's go through these. How did you Vavoline?

Bob: Valvoline came to me.

Michael: What did they say, we like what you're doing and we want...?

Bob: Well let me tell you what, that is a deal that I lost that you have no idea how much money I would have made. They originally brought me in for product and exposure only. That means that they would make up brochures and flyers and big pictures to sell and have their name on it and they would do all the printing for me and I would get all the money. And I used to sell Valvoline stuff with my name on it all over the place and made really good money with it.

Michael: You made royalties.

Bob: Yeah I made kind of like royalties.

Michael: So if your face or your brand was on their product you made a royalty on those sells?

Bob: Exactly.

Michael: And your manager helped you handle all this.

Bob: Well really and truly Russ was my booking agent more than he was manager in that respect. I actually handled all the big deals that I got I did them myself.

Michael: Was it hard?

Bob: No they came to me I didn't go to anybody. Everybody I got came to me and that makes it a whole lot easier as you very well know. And let me tell you the deal in the end. Three weeks before I got hurt at Appalachia Lake they said "We want you to come to Ashland, Kentucky. We have a really good proposition we want to make you and see what you think about it. Well I was in the middle of the promotion of Appalachia Lake so I took a day off and we went to Ashland, because I was in West Virginia and Ashland Kentucky is not far. So we went and I sat down with them and they said "Here's what we want to do we want to put your picture on every can of oil that is produced by Valvoline Motor oil for five years that goes around the world and we're going to give you a nickel a can.

Michael: Wow.

Bob: That's millions of dollars. They had all the artist's conceptions and they wanted me to choose the can, the one that I liked the best.

Michael: And they showed them to you.

Bob: Yeah.

Michael: Do you have pictures of those?

Bob: No.

Michael: Were you married?

Bob: Well no.

Michael: But your girlfriend.

Bob: Yeah my girlfriend, but the media wanted her to be married and everybody else wanted to think we were married because that was the thing to do back in the '70s you know.

Michael: How was she feeling about all this?

Bob: Oh she was wonderful. This girl was smart as a whip. She came from Detroit Michigan, she'd been to finishing school, been through college. She was a model for Chrysler at the time I met her. I met her because I was jumping some Chryslers in Detroit. But anyway she traveled with me everywhere and they loved her. Her name was Jan. She was beautiful she was a little Italian girl she was blond headed blond, her dad was Sicilian her mom was Roman and she was smart as a whip and she just was a classy chick to have along with you. Everybody loved her, the media loved her, Kawasaki loved her, the Navy loved her, everybody.

Michael: So as far as everyone knew she was your wife.

Bob: Yeah.

Michael: Did you have kids?

Bob: Oh yeah, I had kids but after my accident...

Michael: After your accident okay.

Bob: Actually I have my son Bobby who's 38, I had him in my early, early years, but my other three I had them afterwards.

Michael: Okay Valvoline. So a nickel a can and that was going to be a deal. You picked one of the cans.

Bob: Yeah I picked the can but I hadn't signed the deal yet. I told them I said "You know what, I don't have time to go drill this thing for something this big I should really bring Rupp involved in it and we probably get my attorney. I had an attorney in Jacksonville Harold Hamowitz.

Michael: At what point did you have to get an attorney?

Bob: I mean that's what I thought. I thought this thing's too big for me just to do I need more advice. So I told them I said "After Appalachia Lake is over I'll be back and we'll make these deals happen." I said "I'm excited about it." So I felt real good about it and they felt good about it and they weren't worried about me bringing the attorney in because they would probably have attorneys too for a deal that size it would have be millions of dollars.

Michael: What did the can look like the one you picked?

Bob: Well I mean it was a Valvoline can and it had different pictures of me jumping. It had a picture of my face and it had a picture, one of them was like when I was doing the Ryder commercial, and another one I believe it was the 22 car jump or the candy jump. But anyway they all had different pictures on it. And I told them I wanted face recognition and that's the one I wanted.

Michael: That was smart. You wanted the one that showed your face.

Bob: Yeah. As a matter of fact it was actually, I still have it, I'm sitting on my Kawasaki at the Ryder commercial and the Ryder trucks are behind me and you can see me I'm very notable. And I think if I remember right the picture I have I think it even has Valvoline on my jacket, I think.

Michael: So what we were doing is going through your sponsors. Before we get to the Ryder deal what other stuff was happening, Valvoline?

Bob: We had Winnebago. Winnebago was interested only in Winnebago's with my name on the side. There was no money in that deal.

Michael: Alright. You had Kawasaki.

- Bob: Kawasaki was a money deal.
- Michael: You had Navy.
- Bob: Navy was a credibility thing. Valvoline was product endorsement thing and they would print all my stuff I made money on that.
- Michael: Alright first off before we get to the next one just tell what happened with the lady who had the dealership.
- Bob: I'm glad you brought that up because it's a tearjerker. After I went to LA and I decided I'm going to do that I started thinking that night in the hotel I said "You know what, Ms. Reeves she's like my mom and she loves me, she really does, and how am I going to tell her this? So I called her up on the phone and I said "Ms. Reeves" I said "I got really a big gigantic personal issue that I need to talk to you about." I said "Would you mind if I flew to Greenville and you just picked me up?" And she says "Oh honey" - she talks to me like that - "Oh Bobby I love you. Whatever it could be I'll get a hotel for you and I'll come get you." I said "Okay." So I fly out there we go to dinner and I told her I said "Ms. Reeves" - that's what I always called her Ms. Reeves - I said "I just was in California and I was offered a gigantic, gigantic deal with Kawasaki Motor Corporation." And she says "Well tell me about it." And I told her about it. She says "I've been trying to get Suzuki to do the same thing and they just don't seem to like have any vision to do that?" And she got up from the table and she come around the other side and she put her arms around me and gave me a big kiss and she says "I am so proud of you."
- Michael: She said do it.
- Bob: She said "Do it." She said "I gave them a chance." She said "They're the losers not you because I love all the things" - and a couple of years before I got her I wrote Kawasaki she had my jump bikes in her Suzuki Greenville on a revolving Lazy Susan type thing on a motor with a light on it and all the pictures and all this stuff and she was so proud of that. And she would tell people they'd ask her what happened to me. Ah he signed with Kawasaki got a bunch of money with them. She would tell them that as if he you didn't want to pay him any money. She was just dead on.
- Michael: She really cared about you.

Bob: Yeah she really did, and still does. She's like my second mom I mean she's just a wonderful, wonderful lady and I can't wait to see her in Greeneville when I go to...

Michael: Okay back to the other sponsors. What else was going on before your accident?

Bob: The other ones are not real big. I had Bell's Helmet.

Michael: But Bell's big now.

Bob: But they weren't gigantic thing. They didn't have a lot of money back then, they do now.

Michael: So what did they do?

Bob: They gave me helmets. Helmets and they would print me some things and a little publicity once in a while, nothing gigantic. It was fine. Back then Bell Star Helmets were less than \$100 dollars. The deal was worth probably maybe \$300 or \$400 dollars, maybe \$500 dollars. But I wore them because I had always wore them in my racing career, they're the best helmets on the planet, and I wanted a Bell's Helmet. And I went to them and asked them and they said "We'll give you a helmet." And then Bates Leathers, they're still around Bates in Southern California they're in the LA area, they never gave me money but they gave me - I mean leather back then I think were around \$600 dollars for custom leathers. They're now about \$3000 grand I think.

Michael: Wow and that's pants, jackets.

Bob: Yeah, pants, the jacket, and that's basically it, but really nice stuff and I had my name on the legs and Kawasaki on the sides. And Kawasaki loved it and they were green and white. They looked really, really nice.

Michael: So let's say you wreck on the pavement, would those things hold up to the pavement with...?

Bob: Oh yeah.

Michael: And that's the whole point of those.

Bob: Yeah that's the whole idea.

Michael: Do they have any padding in there?

Bob: Well yeah, but you know what, that's not the good idea. What happens is they put that nylon like liner inside in the padding and everything and when you slide on the pavement the heat that the leather generate makes the nylon melt into your skin and it sticks to you. That happened to me in Memphis when I fell. That one picture that you see when my front wheel collapses and I go down and slide, that took all the skin off my left arm and it was all because that that leather got so hot it melted that nylon.

Michael: Did they know that?

Bob: Well I told them. And I told them I said "From now on out I don't want any liners in them I just want leather." That was something that we had all learned together. But Bates to me they were like a real nice family company and anytime I needed anything - like if you noticed my leathers had fringe on the back and my fans use to like to yank the fringe off. He also liked to take a piece of fringe home with him. So they were constantly yanking my fringe off. I had three sets of leathers and I would always have one set in transient to Bates and they would put the new fringe on and send them back to whatever hotel I was going to be at the next location. And then I gave them a really big shot, them and Kawasaki both, they asked me to do To Tell The Truth. Remember that show?

Michael: Yeah.

Bob: I did To Tell the Truth. Yeah I played it, that's the weekend that the Navy had me in Washington I went to New York and did that show before I went to Washington.

Michael: That was in '74.

Bob: That was in '74. Two other guys that they'd picked out wore my leather and Kawasaki got a big blast out of it and Bates got a blast.

Michael: So it's I'm Bob Gill Motorcycle Daredevil.

Bob: Yeah. Yeah.

Michael: That's really cool. So that's in '74. So things are really rocking...

Bob: Oh yeah.

Michael: ...from '70 to '74. What's going on with Evel and other jumpers? I remember in the documentary the BBC there was the girl jumper. What was her name?

Bob: Debbie Lawler she's a real good friend of mine.

Michael: Was it Debbie Lawler?

Bob: Debbie Lawler she was the Flying Angel.

Michael: Yeah the Flying Angel.

Bob: Yeah. She jumped in the Houston Astrodome and beat Evel's record. And Evel made a comment he says "Oh that was a big deal." He said "I can spit further than she can jump." And man did that get some press when he said that. He ended up apologizing to her, bought her a pink mink coat and flew her to Seattle to give it to her in front of the press.

Michael: Wow. So just talk about from a marketing standpoint that this whole sponsorship I mean this sponsorship is what makes all this go around right.

Bob: Yeah right.

Michael: Without sponsors you think any of this could have been possible?

Bob: Well I mean if I would have never had one sponsor and the money that I was able to make as a motorcycle jumper after Russ came on the picture I could have made it okay. I mean the money was great. We use to get \$5000 dollar guarantees against \$2 dollars a head and have the capability of drawing 23,000 people.

Michael: Oh okay so he was starting to negotiate different deals rather than a flat fee for a jump?

Bob: Yeah well we experimented with it and experimented with the guarantee against the gate count. Then the promoters started screwing you on the gate count and then we'd have to hire bonded counters to count the counters. And that was before they had ticket sales like they have now computerized and all and with people with handing stubs out you know.

Michael: So they cheat you on the gate count.

Bob: Yeah they are cheating you all the time.

Michael: And you couldn't control it.

Bob: And we controlled it by having that. Well I would get to a point to like if I did a big jump and I got one guy he got me for 3000 people.

Michael: And you were supposed to make how much on each person?

Bob: Two dollars like an extra \$6000 grand. So I said to him I said "I know you don't know this" I said "But I hired bonded counter guys to count your guys as they're coming in and I brought them in with me." And I said "Our numbers are 3000 off" and I said "It's amazing that it happens to be exactly 3000 off." I says "So you guys are lying and these guys are bonded your guys are just people that work here." And we had a big confrontation about that and pretty soon he ended up saying "Well yeah blah, blah, blah" some cockymaney answer and he ended up giving me the extra money. He paid me the whole thing because I would have really ripped him apart in the press and he knew the kind of power I had in the press.

Michael: Did this happen at other places?

Bob: Yeah but not many times because people started catching on they started realizing that I knew what I was doing. But it got better than that and here's how it got better. We would go into the racetrack promoter, well Russ would call them on the phone and say, "We want to bring Bob into your place and we offer a really good opportunity for you to make a lot more money than you normally make." And he'd say to them "How many people have you had on the best day you ever had? Like when you had a big funny car race or a big drag race or whatever, because I jumped at most of these drag strips in my last couple of years and NHRA track. The promoter would say okay the biggest day we had was 18,822 people. So Russ would say "I tell you what", he says "You pay Bob's expenses there like \$2500 bucks and put them up in a hotel Holiday Inn or better and anything over 18,000 people we get half the gate." And the guy would go "Well you know that's not a bad deal.

Michael: How much was the gate?

Bob: I think the gate was \$10 bucks. That was a pretty much normal thing for back then \$10 maybe \$15 at a real big National Championship Funny Car Race or something, but \$10 to \$15 dollars. So that would give him a really good deal because it's only 18,000 people come all he's in for me is \$2500 bucks and a lot of

exposure. If 30,000 people come he's got half the ticket gate that he wouldn't have had without me being there and also I make way more money by doing it that way. So that was the idea that we pretty much had towards the end before I got hurt.

Michael: Did you do any of those deals?

Bob: Oh yeah. Not many.

Michael: Did you bring your own counters then, bonded counters?

Bob: Oh absolutely.

Michael: That was part of the deal.

Bob: Always, always bring the counters and let them know upfront these guys are going to be counting you. So we're not going to play any games this thing is for us all to make money. It's a win-win situation.

Michael: When do you get the money?

Bob: Right after the jump.

Michael: After the jump you go up into the office and they give you the money.

Bob: Absolutely.

Michael: Do they pay you cash or checks?

Bob: Cash then not now. When I jumped in Seattle I jumped in front of, it was about 22,000, 23,000 people and they paid me in cash. And they paid me in \$10s and \$20s and \$50s and stuff like that it was a grocery bag full of money. And I had broke both my molars on both sides where my chin hit the tachometer the bike was a little bit too high in the front when the front wheel slammed down, if you watched the film you'd see my chin go into the tachometer. I'd spitting teeth out man, and I'm bleeding and it's a mess. I actually stayed to 4:00 in the morning signing autographs and rinsing my mouth out with champagne and stuff just to make the pain go away. But we had to go to Detroit after that Jan and I did and we had to take a plane the next day. Well I changed the flight time, I went to the dentist in the morning and he took all the bone pieces out and everything and I didn't know nothing at all about what dry sockets

meant I had no idea what means, and that means you're not supposed to suck all the juice out of it.

Well we're flying in the airplane and my mouth is killing me and I'm sucking and sucking getting this stuff out and I have to drink more and more alcohol. And it got to be when I got there I was pretty much loaded. But the funny part about it was when we got on the airplane, that's when they first started security checks was in '74, and I mean it wasn't even near the leverage it is now. You went up to this counter and you're supposed to take your wallet out and your keys out and let them see what you got. And they didn't have any machines you had to walk through they just did visual look at you. So Jan's got this grocery bag full of money \$47,000 dollars and it's all wadded up and she's got it in her hand, and she's a gorgeous little girl and she's got this great big purse on her shoulder, and this guy is a black guy he's standing behind the counter. And I set my wallet and stuff up there and she sets her grocery bag up there and her purse. And he goes through the purse and he looks all through it and he hands it back to her and then he undoes the grocery bag and looks down in there and he looked at her, looked in the bag. They must have did that about 10 times before...

Michael: Oh my God, yeah.

Bob: ...and he wads the thing back up and he hands it to her and says "Have a good day."

Michael: Oh my God. You wouldn't do that today.

Bob: Oh my God they would take you in the back room and ask you where you got that, what kind of drug money is this, a billion things. But that was the funniest of all. I mean I just about died laughing. It was hilarious. This guy was so serious and I thought he's going to blow the whistle man, this is over. Of course I could have accounted for the money because I was leaving out of Seattle you know.

Michael: Okay so what's going on in the jumping industry with the other jumpers? What are you hearing about Evel or what are you hearing about Debbie Lawler? Who else?

Bob: Well Debbie Lawler was no threat to me at all because I didn't compete against Debbie Lawler I competed against Evel Knievel, that's who my game was and that's who the press compared me with. They always compared me with Evel they never once

mentioned Super Joe Einhorn from Oakland California he would have never came in the picture.

Michael: Was he doing jumps too?

Bob: He was a ramp-to-ramp jumper like Evel. He was a big druggie guy and all his crew was a bunch of drug heads.

Michael: Were you clean? Were you doing any drugs?

Bob: No I was clean as a whistle. I was the guy with the white hat.

Michael: You didn't drink.

Bob: I didn't drink. I mean I hit...

Michael: A little champagne or beer.

Bob: ...but I'd never got drunk and never would do crazy stuff.

Michael: And that's probably why a lot of the sponsors liked you.

Bob: That's why they came to me I was like the kid next door. That's what they told me. Kawasaki they absolutely fell in love me, them and the Navy both. They had plans for me if I wouldn't have got hurt I would still be on their payroll.

Michael: Why were competing against Evel?

Bob: Because he was the only kid on the block that was giving me any competition. I used to jump further every week than Evel ever jumped in his life. I used to do 19 cars as a standard jump and it was about 170 feet. And Evel used to claim 150, 140 feet, in all reality it was about 130, 135.

Michael: He wasn't competing, he just wanted the money.

Bob: Oh he was all about money. He didn't care the kind of bikes he rode, he didn't care whether they went to the air straight. I was a real fanatic about that. Kawasaki when they signed with me, not only did they give me all that money, they flew their engineers over from Japan that build airplanes. And they set me up at Irwindale Raceway in California and we jumped their standard bike and every time the thing would land and hit the ground they would stretch, they would grow and they'd grow two to three inches in length. My Suzuki used to do the same thing because the technology wasn't

there they were using mild steel and they weren't using chromoly tubing and stuff. So Kawasaki shot all this high speed film and they took all that data back to Japan. And when they came out with a bike for me I mean to tell you that thing you could ride it off a cliff.

Oh one more sponsor I had S&W Shocks. It was not a money deal it was just a product deal but I really wanted them because they were the best and Tim Witham was the 'W' in S&W. He's dead now he was an old man at that time, and he used to have his R&D Department in the bottom of his house in Pasadena and every time I came to town he used to go in there and he would build me special shocks that were progressive dampening. Do you know what that means?

Michael: No.

Bob: Because back in those days we only had three inches of travel that's all the shocks that we had. We'd have four inches in the front and three in the back. Today they got 14 in the back and 12 in the front so you can see there's a lot of difference. So what he had to do was he designed a thing called Progressive Dampening meaning that every time the pleasure went down that it would get tougher and tougher as it went down it didn't stay the same. And the spring rate would not overload the dampening so that you would get a kabong, a bounce. So when I landed they would not bounce they would stay flat they stay stuck to the ground because of that progressive dampening. Even in today's world, believe it or not Michael, they don't have that. The guys, I watch them all the time, they hit the landing ramp and they bounce. The guys that do the dirt pile stuff, the real big high jump like Robbie Maddison did in Las Vegas on New Year's Eve I think two or three years ago, those things bounce all over the place because it's brain rate overrides the dampening.

Michael: It looked like that's what happened on Evel's Wembley's jump.

Bob: Well you know what happened on the Wembley jump, and I'll tell you exactly what it is because I'm really worried about Robbie. As a matter of fact I'm going to go to South Carolina.

Michael: Robbie Knievel.

Bob: Yeah. I'm going to go see Robbie on my trip.

Michael: Why? What's he getting ready to do?

Bob: He's going to jump at Wembley. He's going to do the same jump his dad did but he's going to add three buses. He's going to jump 16 instead of 13.

Michael: When?

Bob: June 12th I think. It's going to be a multimillion dollar deal. But he wants to use a Harley just like his dad did. Now I'll tell you why that's a bad deal and I'll tell you why Evel didn't care. Evel didn't care the bike he jumped because he was interested in the money that they paid him. He could care less about the other. He always felt like he could make it work. Well what a Harley XR does, the XR is the version that they use for half mile and mile dirt track racing. Being a dirt track racer I know this so coming off the corner you want to have the engine back so the weight is on the rear wheel so you get that good bike coming off corner. Well that's all good and dandy for half mile racing but it's not worth a hoot for jumping through the air. Because just picture this, if you had a bow and arrow and you took the arrow and turned it around backwards and shot it you think maybe the front end would start turning around and go forward or you think it would just go straight. Well it's going to start turning around because the heavy end wants to pass the light end.

Well a Harley XR it has a tendency because of the way engine turns and the gyro effect you get from it the bike once it turns to the right the rear wheel wants to come around to the right and that's called Yaw, like if you're flying that would be your yaw. So you have no control over yaw you got control over attitude up and down. You can tap the front brake, tap the rear brake and get the front wheel to come down or up that's real maneuverable in the air but you can't control yaw. So Evel when he would leave on that Harley he would actually start to fall when he left the takeoff ramp. The things starting to yaw around to the right it comes down on the landing ramp on an angle and it pitches him over the handlebars because the rear wheel is to the right. It throws him over and chases him down the ramp and runs over him from time-to-time like it did at Caesar's Palace and that's what's wrong with that type of thing. So Robbie's going to do an XR jump three buses further than his dad could get it across and he doesn't seem to get it because he's been riding a Honda for so many years that that's what's going to happen.

Michael: And who's his sponsor Harley?

Bob: Well Harley will probably sponsor him, yeah more than likely, but he needs to make that swing arm longer. I'm going to help me if he'll want to...

Michael: Well have you told him of your concern?

Bob: Yes. I'm going to go there live on my trip and I'm going to sit down with him and his manager and tell him that "Robbie's going to make millions of dollars on his jump but he's not going to live to get through it." And that's the truth he's not going to make it he needs to make these changes on his bike. And if listens to me that'll be great and I don't want a dime from it, I'm not asking for any money, I'm just really concerned about him. I've known him since he was a little boy and his dad and I were just great friends for 30 years why would I want his son to get killed? And I have the knowledge, I'm not trying to pat myself on the back, but I know how to do this. So I want to help him with that. If he doesn't listen to me and he gets killed myself I feel relieved, but I feel like I know the answer and if I don't share it with him he gets...

Michael: Yeah you got to share it with him and at least you did the best you could. Okay so why wouldn't he go further? He didn't care about the record or he just wanted the money, that's where we got off on the subject.

Bob: Well it was about the money and the fact that Evel really and truly when you're as popular as Evel Knievel was you can showcase yourself and make a lot of money. Do you know what I mean by that? You don't have to go out and do records you just kind of have to be there and do it, because he was the first, I mean you got to give him the credit. And the name and he really knew how to promote that he was a big mouth and he really got the press and he got tremendous publicity. So Evel knew how to play the game.

Michael: Did he have a good team, a good marketing team, or was he doing most of that?

Bob: No he did most of it himself. He never really was into that. He thought that he could do anything, anything and everything. I'm sure that he had some help from time-to-time.

Michael: Tell me about the insurance, how did you insure yourself? Who insured you for these jumps?

Bob: I never had any personal medical insurance but I did have insurance at NHRA Drag Strip. I was the only one that had a

competition license. They wouldn't even let Evel have one they said he fell down too much.

Michael: What's a competition license?

Bob: A competition license is being able to compete as an exhibitionist on a NHRA track.

Michael: Alright, so if you did your jump and you were hurt the insurance covered it.

Bob: Yep. I didn't get hurt on an NHRA track I got hurt at a lake.

Michael: No but if you did get hurt on one of your jumps.

Bob: Then I would have been insured yes. I'd have medical insurance. I never broke a fingernail on a NHRA track.

Michael: So your sponsors couldn't offer insurance?

Bob: They probably could have, but you know what I never even really were concerned about...

Michael: You didn't worry about it.

Bob: No I wasn't concerned about that. When you're young and doing that kind of stuff, making that kind of money, you think you can do it forever and you don't think things are going to happen bad.

Michael: Alright tell me about the Ryder commercial. How did that happen?

Bob: Okay this is really good.

**Please continue to Part 2.**

You're listening to an interview on Michael Senoff's [www.HardToFindSeminars.com](http://www.HardToFindSeminars.com).

Michael: I want to talk about the Ryder Commercial. Tell me the story about the Ryder commercial. What year was this?

Bob: This was in 1973 and I got called about it around February of '73, I actually did the thing in May.

Michael: So who called you? Do you remember that day? Where were you?

Bob: I was actually off for the winter and I was at home, which was in Tamp/St. Petersburg area and Joey Chitwood my good friend the car stunt guy who does all the Bond movies and all. He calls me up and he says "Bob" he said "I just had an interesting phone call." And I go like "What was it?" He says "Well Ryder Trucks called me and wanted to know whether or not I could" - and he wasn't talking about himself - he said "Whether I could jump a whole fleet of Ryder Trucks for a Super Bowl commercial and for a national promotion for Ryder. And Joey says "Well, why don't you call Evel Knievel?" And they said "Well we did call Evel Knievel and he said he couldn't do it." So Joey says to me he says "What do you think? Do you think you could do that?" I said "Well Joey I don't use a landing ramp." I said "I can't go over those great big tractor trailers and everything and land the thing down." And he says "Well you know it's going to be a national commercial, it's going to be on the Super Bowl and all like that." He said "You just got to remember what I just told you Evel said he couldn't do it." And I said "Well you know what, sign me up I'm in."

Michael: What was the distance?

Bob: It was 152 feet and it was one of everything that they rented including their tractor trailer.

Michael: Were they already a national brand?

Bob: Oh yeah they were fighting with U-Haul they were in a big U-Haul battle that's how they went down. And so Joey got that deal for me, I mean it was gigantic, it put me on the map.

Michael: And then they called you personally?

Bob: Yes. Yes. They told me the heights of all the vehicles and what order they were going to be put in and I had Frank run the numbers on the thing and he came up with it.

Michael: Did Frank think you could do it?

Bob: Well yeah, he said that "If we would had been riding with Suzuki" he says "No." He says "Probably the bike would never have stood the impact," he says "But this was that super duper Kawasaki bike they built for me in Japan with all the chromoly tubing and all the shocks and all the good stuff. I felt real confident about doing it I didn't have any doubt. What was really hard about it was that I had been in Caracas, Venezuela doing a jump down there for their

government it was kind of like a Wide World of Sports thing in the US type thing. Their TV station they invited me down there to do a jump. So when I was down there the next place I was supposed to go was to Miami to do this jump on Masters Field so that they could edit it and run it on Super Bowl VIII.

Michael: So the Ryder jump was going to be on Masters Field.

Bob: Yes that was in Miami. And the problem that I was having was I flew back from Caracas and I landed in Miami and I checked in a hotel and were supposed to do the Ryder thing, and they brought all the Ryder Trucks out and they had everything all setup all the cameras. The camera crew I believe back in those days I think it was like \$16,000 dollars a day for their crew.

Michael: Were you nervous?

Bob: Yeah I was nervous. When they started parking the trucks they really started looking long and looking really high.

Michael: Was it on the grass or right on the pavement?

Bob: It was on the pavement. They rented the airport. They closed the airport down. So they thought well we have to do a lot of preliminary stuff. We want to have you jump several times to the air just short jumps so we can get some landing shots and stuff like that. So if you fall we can still make a commercial, which makes good sense I mean its good business sense. But the problem was this, my bike when I came back to Caracas they put it on the wrong airplane and they lost it, they didn't know where it was.

Michael: Yeah.

Bob: So it was the only one of its kind. Now I didn't have any more they only bought me one in the beginning I ended up with two later on. But I mean at one point I go out there and I tell them I go, the Kawasaki dealer was out there too and he says "Where's your bike?" And I said "You're not going to believe this." I said "They lost it." He said "They couldn't have lost it." He said "We got a gazillion dollars spent on this thing to do this commercial." And I said "Well just chill out." I said "Let's get the Kawasaki guy to bring one of the 350s in and we'll do a little artwork on the tank and I'll just ride it along, and I can make these short jumps that you want to do with it because you only wanted me to go like 75 feet or something." And I said "We'll just kind buy some time until the thing comes here."

So a couple of days go by and they call and they say “We found it it’s in Madrid Spain.” They found it in the warehouse in Madrid. So they shipped it over here and it got here like 3:00 in the morning. And what a blessing that was and I’ll tell you why. We went to the airport to pick the thing up and normally customs in the middle of the day they go through everything, especially in Miami with all the drug trafficking that was coming in the ‘70s it was really bad then. So my box was just sitting there, it was a real nice box it was custom made for my bike and it had a thing in the front where I could put all my tools and parts and stuff and the bike was in the back it was all strapped in real good. So they opened up the top of it where the bike was and they looked in there, the customs guys did, they unscrewed the gas tank and looked in there put it back on it and they said “Okay you guys can go”, and like I said “It’s 3:00 in the morning.

So they put the thing in a Ryder Truck naturally and they take off with it and they show up at the airport in the morning and they bring the thing, slide it off, we take the bike out. I opened up the front, you know what my guys had done, they had took all the parts out and all the tools out and filled it all full of booze. They filled it with polar beer and all kinds of rums and gins and all kinds of crap. Do you know what customs would have done to me? I would have never got the bike back.

Michael: They put that all in the box.

Bob: Yeah.

Michael: Your guys did. They wanted to bring back some stuff.

Bob: Because you could buy it for next of nothing down there.

Michael: Did the guys from Ryder see that they...?

Bob: Oh they didn’t care they laughed about it.

Michael: That’s funny.

Bob: We all laughed about it, it was funny. Mike Tackley he worked for me, and I said “Tackley”, I said “What in the world is going on with this?” He says “Well we had an opportunity to get a lot of stuff to bring it all back.” I said “Under normal circumstances not a problem but for international flight and with the customs like they are in Miami my God they would have taken the bike away forever, they

would have probably cut it in half to see if there was any drugs in it.”

Michael: Was Ryder getting impatient because it was taking so long?

Bob: Well they were a little bit impatient but the beauty of the thing was Michael Sloane Productions, this was his first job, this was his very first job...

Michael: Producing the commercial.

Bob: Yeah doing the commercials. And his camera crew, even though he was paying them \$16,000, they did not want to have to set the cameras up to do this because of speed. So I am the one who set the cameras up and I've got pictures of me doing it. I set every camera up and every one of them did perfect. These guys were going to put them on their shoulders and shoot them. And I said "You can't do that." I said "I think you need eight or nine cameras." I showed them where I wanted to put all of them at. And I said "When I get ready to go I want you to push the button and turn them on and just let them run.

Michael: Because you had done this before.

Bob: Oh I mean I had watched the media for so many times I know what's good and what doesn't work. I just put all my faith in my experience and Sloane let me do it. And he told me at the end he says "Man" he says "I'd never seen such good footage in all my life." He took it the next day down to a movie theatre and reviewed all the raw footage down there and they took all that footage, which they had a ton of it, and made it into one of the most dynamic 30 second commercials on the planet. It got national awards for best commercial of the year, most action of the year, it just got every kind of award known to mankind, plus it made Ryder Number 1.

Michael: Is the full commercial on YouTube? Have you seen it, do you know?

Bob: I have never found it on YouTube. I wish it had the voiceover because Dennis Weaver did the voiceover. I mean right now Chantal my ex-girlfriend she put Jimi Hendrix on there, which I think is pretty cool, but when he says his going to kiss the skies right at the top of the jump. But it used to say, I'll tell you what it said, when you seem me coming from the long distance away if you look at it on really high-definition film you can actually see the heat waves coming up because it was 105 degrees on that runway that day.

And while I'm coming Dennis Weaver he says "Ryder rents trucks. Ryder rents them for a year, for a month, for a week, for a day, for a second and a half." And that's when I hit the ramp and went up over the truck and he never said nothing after that and then it landed in a big black box where you never could see the landing. And I said to this woman I said "Why didn't you do that?" He said because that's what's going to make Ryder Number 1." He said "Everybody's going to run to their neighbor and go "Did you see the Ryder commercial? Did the guy make it.?"

Michael: Oh they didn't show the landing.

Bob: They didn't show the landing.

Michael: They showed your wheel, the back wheel...

Bob: The rear wheel because I had wind blowing in my face is why that happened. The flag went straight out when I got to the ramp and there was nowhere to go. I was like right in the middle of the 18 wheelers I would have crashed so I went anyway, but my rear wheel touched that ninth truck and it skipped across. But that's what made the commercial because everybody was going around to everybody in the US going "Did you see the Ryder commercial? Did you see Ryder?" And everybody's going Ryder, Ryder, Ryder, Ryder and that subconsciously goes in your mind when you want a rental truck and it worked. And they ran it for two years man. They ran in all major markets like sometimes eight times a day.

Michael: Wow.

Bob: They did that for 26 weeks.

Michael: What did that feel like just watching you all coming at that time?

Bob: Oh it was wild. But I'll tell you what really felt good was the money.

Michael: With the Ryder commercial, how was that deal negotiated?

Bob: Well the Screens Actors Guild had to get involved in it because it was a commercial. And Screen Actors Guild what's so good about them they keep track that way you can't get screwed. They keep track of every time it runs and you get paid so much money every time they run it.

Michael: Does that still happen today?

- Bob: Oh yeah.
- Michael: Screen Actors Guild. Why do they get involved?
- Bob: Well they get involved because they're supposed to take care of actors and make sure they don't get screwed by the media.
- Michael: And you were the actor.
- Bob: Yeah. I was classified as an actor yeah. They paid for it. They paid for me to join the Screen Actors Guild. So I would get checks like every month.
- Michael: They're kind of like a union right.
- Bob: Like a union, yes exactly.
- Michael: What was it based on how many times it aired you would make money?
- Bob: Every time it was aired in every market. I think the amount of money was determined by the population. It was broken down by all kinds of different things but the first 26 weeks was off the hook man, the money was just phenomenal.
- Michael: Can you tell what kind of checks you were getting on those?
- Bob: Thirty thousand.
- Michael: Thirty grand. How often did those come?
- Bob: A month.
- Michael: Man that is just crazy. Okay let's get to the Guinness Book of World Records. Tell me when you first broke the Guinness Book of World Records record.
- Bob: That was in Seattle at Seattle International Raceway.
- Michael: Now were you going for the record I mean...?
- Bob: Yes.
- Michael: So tell me what happens, if I say I want to break a record and that's what you said, what's the process with Guinness? What did you do back then?

- Bob: Well in those days all they really required was a formal sheet sent to them notarized by a notary that the racetrack promoter and maybe two or three witnesses seeing the jump done. Now Guinness has to be there. They require them to be there now because it was some bogus things that were going down.
- Michael: What record were you going after?
- Bob: Well Evel's jump was 19 cars and that was done at Cherry Hill Motor Speedway back when that was still there.
- Michael: What year was this when you were going for the record?
- Bob: Oh that was July 17, 1973.
- Michael: And he had a record of 19 cars.
- Bob: Nineteen cars.
- Michael: Was that the record cars or did it go by feet?
- Bob: He never used feet because he never really went that far. I mean had six of those cars under the landing ramp and my cars were all full sized cars, they were the real deal. And I went 171 and he never went anywhere near that, he probably went maybe 135. The way it went down was the racetrack promoter called Dave Rupp and said "I would like Bob to jump at Seattle International Raceways but we want him to go for a world record, whatever that is, we need to find out what that is." And Rupp found out, I mean I knew it was 19 but I wasn't sure, but it turned out to be 19. So the guy says "Well, what do you want to do? Do you want to do 20, 21, 22, how many do you want to do?" And I told Rupp I said "Let's do 22 that's my lucky number."
- Michael: Was it your lucky number?
- Bob: Yeah.
- Michael: Had you ever done 22 before?
- Bob: No. No.
- Michael: Okay 22.

Bob: I could have actually probably jumped like 28 I went so far. Frank and I we decided we were going to go 170 and since it was going to be a Guinness Book of World Records I wanted it to be a big one.

Michael: Okay. So you did it, you landed successfully.

Bob: Yeah.

Michael: That must have been pretty cool. Was that your first World Record?

Bob: And it was done at night time, nobody had ever done one.

Michael: Yeah, what made you decide to do it at night time?

Bob: Probably because of the spectacular of it all, the fireworks. Joey Chitwood would set me up with a thing on my handlebars all I had to do was push the button and it would shoot fireworks off the back. Like they do with pyro now that was before pyro was even around. And when I touched the bottom of the takeoff ramp I pushed the button and it shot fire all the way across behind me. That's what really made it super spectacular.

Michael: Was it difficult at night?

Bob: Well no because I jumped at night a lot. I was a nighttime jumper. Racetracks when you do great big NHRA racetracks most of that stuff happens at nighttime. But they want you to jump after everything's over with because the whole idea is the concessions are so big, the beer and the hot dogs and they don't want you to jump first because the people that came to watch you jump are going to go. So they jump me like at 1:00 in the morning and I didn't get done signing autographs until after 4:00 am. The sun was actually coming up when I left there.

Michael: Let me do the Canyon jump. I know in that documentary Evel when he did Snake River, tell me the story about - he wanted to do a Canyon jump but the government wouldn't allow him to jump over the Canyon and he ended up buying a piece of the Canyon.

Bob: They wouldn't allow him to jump the Grand Canyon so he went to the Snake River, he went to Idaho and they let him do it there. But there was no way in the world that the US Government was going to let him jump over top the Grand Canyon. Number 1 they thought for sure he'd probably get killed and they'd get liable for it. I mean that was just a big sticky mess. He jumped off the Grand Canyon

right away. That movie with George Hamilton “*Evil Knievel*” was all about him jumping the Grand Canyon and that was before they got the no sign. But they got the no they couldn’t do it so he found out when he got to Snake River.

Michael: I mean who was this guy was building that contraption that was going to supposedly rocket them over Snake River? Did he have a chance of that being successful do you think?

Bob: No, there’s a whole lot of stories going on about that whole thing and I’m probably one of the hands full that really knows the truth Evel told me what happened. And not only did Evel tell me but the guy that originally built the original jet, they called The Sky Cycle his name was Doug Malawiki and he’s in California. He actually built the very first one he was going to be steamed power and he was going to have Olympia Beer powering it as the sponsor and they were going to use beer in it to get the power built up. And it was going to have a quarter mile takeoff and go up the ramp and go over the Canyon and parachute down. It was going to be a real motorcycle jump over a Canyon.

And Doug Malawiki built the Sky Cycle for Evel and he did tests on models. Doug used to work for NASA in the development stages back when they would make models they would make major scale models so he knew how to do that stuff. So he made scale models and he actually went to the Snake River and they launched the thing and he made it two or three times, the vehicle did it perfect all remote control.

Michael: But when it did it perfect what was the perfect jump? It wouldn’t go all the way across to the land would it?

Bob: It would go all the way across the land and the parachute would come out, it would come down and land on its nose and the nose had a big shock and so it land on the other side. That was the original plan okay.

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Michael: How is it like classified as a motorcycle though?

Bob: This thing had two wheels on it and you’re going to actually get to ride a quarter mile and up the ramp and over and it was going to be going probably 250 to 300 miles an hour. But he was going to

probably do it anyway because he was young and crazy just like I was when I did the crazy stuff I did.

Michael: Who were the sponsors in on that deal?

Bob: Olympia Beer was the one that was going to put up a lot of money and then naturally that pay-per-view thing which they call it something else by then.

Michael: Well Evel's claim in one of his interviews he made \$20 million on that.

Bob: Well that sounds good and smells good but I know the truth of that. Anyway Doug built this thing and it goes it all and he asked Evel he hocked everything he had to build this vehicle it was a real deal, and I even got pictures of it.

Michael: Evel hocked everything he had.

Bob: No, no Doug Malawiki did, he built it. He asked Evel for the money and Evel said "Well I'll pay you after it's over with." Well Doug got really mad about that because he had put his house up for hock and everything. I mean he'd done everything to make this thing work because it was probably the biggest project he'd ever done in his life. Well Evel told him he wasn't going to pay him until it was over with and that was going to be probably a year or so later down the road. But Doug got really mad about it and he took his sledgehammer and he beat the thing all up. He broke it all up into a million pieces he was just so mad. So now Evel doesn't have a Sky Cycle and Doug is out of a lot of money and there's a big bunch of real bad feelings going on in that whole situation.

So Evel finds this guy his name is name is Bob Truax and Bob Truax builds this rocket things and it's not a motorcycle it's a rocket. You've seen the pictures, you saw my video and he built it really well, and he built it to where if you could imagine sitting in a cockpit and you have a lever and you're holding the lever, your arm is out straight holding the lever and if you pull it the parachute comes out right. So they launch the thing and what happens with all the thrust?

Michael: The G forces pulled its arm back.

Bob: Pulled his arm back and the chute came out right on the takeoff landing on the launch pad. And it went twirling through the air and

it lost all its steam, all its power, and it dropped over and it went down in the Canyon. So that's the truth of what really happened.

Michael: No electrical malfunction.

Bob: No.

Michael: But that other guy had one that wouldn't work.

Bob: Oh it wouldn't work, absolutely. Like you say he's an expert in making models to scale and everything and he actually launched it three times and it worked.

Michael: But because Evel didn't want to pay the money...

Bob: That's what screwed the whole thing all up yeah. Evel was notorious for not paying people what he owed them and I'm not the only one on the planet to know that. So it's not like a secret that's just the way he was. I mean I don't look down upon him about it that's the way it was. Anybody that would get in business with him said they didn't know about that and they ended up getting screwed if they did know about it and they did know it anyway it was their own fault. But that's just the way he was and that was what made him Evel Knievel. Evel was a bank robber when he was a kid for crying out loud, I mean you know the story about that, and everybody knows about it.

Michael: I don't. I know he did some bad things...

Bob: He robbed banks and he was in jail a lot in Butte and that's where he's from. And as a matter of fact the jailer that used to put people in jail is still alive and he comes to Evel Days every year and he shows people the jail. I mean now everybody goes to the jail and looks where Evel was at and all that stuff. It's the real deal he was a bad guy.

Michael: What did you do with all the money you were making in '73 and '74? Were you saving it or...?

Bob: I wish I would have been. You get that young mentality and you think you're going to be able to do this forever. And then all of a sudden you develop all these friends that you never thought you'd ever find and you spend it all on them flying them to the islands and on hotels and traveling around the country with them, you get hurt they all of a sudden disappear. Well I went through that.

Michael: Let's talk about that day. So tell me the day of your accident. What was this jump called?

Bob: It was called The Great Jump. It was on billboards in five states.

Michael: Who conceived of the idea?

Bob: Dave Coon, he's dead now he died of a heart attack when he was pretty young, but he's the one that thought of it and I knew him and Dave and I were really good friends and he asked me if I would jump Appalachia Lake.

Michael: And you knew of Appalachia Lake.

Bob: Yeah I said "How far is it across?" He says "200 feet." I said "Well I jumped 252 in Minneapolis. I feel because I landed in some oil from a funny car when he lost his motor but I went 252." And I said "I don't think I have any problems doing that." That's how I got involved with Appalachia Lake. I should have never done it. I mean it was dumb. I was making some really good money and I had some great things to do besides that. I was getting ready to go to Norfolk, Virginia and do an aircraft carrier jump for the Navy and they were going to air that thing around the world. And I was going to open Great Adventure in New Jersey I was going to jump their fountain.

Michael: All this stuff was scheduled.

Bob: Oh yeah all scheduled and I was going to jump over the rolling stones.

Michael: That was scheduled too.

Bob: That was scheduled.

Michael: Where were they going to be playing for that jump?

Bob: You know I don't really remember there's some things that are blank in my mind, like I don't remember where but I remember that it was a done deal we were going to do it.

Michael: Oh man. So what was the deal for this lake jump?

Bob: It was actually a country western pavilion. It was a campground. It was a motocross course and it was like a big fishing...people go there and fish for bass. It was just a beautiful layout in the

mountains of West Virginia, just gorgeous, really gorgeous. It was a manmade lake and at the end of it at its narrowest point it was two hundred feet across.

Michael: And you said in the video your wife had a bad feeling about it, everyone had bad feelings.

Bob: She begged me not to do it. The way that she was she took my motorcycle jumping like I was delivering milk. She has so much confidence in me she never ever got nervous, I'd give her a big kiss leaving the motor home and say "Hey honey why don't you think of someplace you'd like to go when we're done and go get something to eat, go get a few drinks, whatever." And we were never like "Oh my God are you going to come back, it never was none of that." And when Appalachia Lake came about she was really very strange during the whole time. And the night before she got on her knees and she says "Bobby" - she used to call me Bobby - she says "Bobby I hate to say this to you but I don't have any confidence in this thing. I think there's something wrong with this. I don't feel good about it." They gave me a \$5000 deposit.

She said "Even if they don't give you the deposit back let's go to Virginia with our Navy guys and do that jump on a carrier and we're going to hang out in the Officer's Club and have a good time. Let's just get out of here these guys are crazy man." And I said to her I said "You know what, if you'd have said this two weeks ago I probably would've went along with it, I said "But Dave Coons is a good friend of mine and he's going to end up in a really big pinch man." See I got rained out the first week and a whole bunch of Hell's Angels guys from Ohio came to it and they almost pushed my mother-in-law over because I wouldn't jump in the rain.

Michael: Oh really.

Bob: Oh it was a mess and I had every reason in the world to leave. Anybody in their right mind would have left.

Michael: So it was set for a week before but the rain rained it out.

Bob: Right it was set for the 18th of August and I jumped on the 25th.

Michael: So it was bad luck all the way around.

Bob: She just said, she said "Man this whole thing is bad." She said "This is not the crowd that you normally jump to." See my crowd was not like Evel's crowd. Evel used to draw the Hell's Angels and

stuff like that and I drew grandmothers and families with kids and they would all come over and hug me and I never rode off in a limousine with three bodyguards. I mingled with the crowd as I do today. And that was just me that was the way I was and that's the kind of stuff I did. And that's what the Navy liked about me and that's what...

Michael: Yeah you were a clean good American boy.

Bob: I was the guy with the white hat.

Michael: And that's the type of people you attract.

Bob: Yeah exactly. So that was my crowd. And Jan says "That's what's wrong with this place it's got all the wrong people. This is not you. You need to be not here. This is like an Evel Knievel jump." She used to say that to me from time-to-time during the time we were there. We were there for 30 days promoting the thing but she waited to the last night. She just said "I can't sleep you got to not do this, you just got to leave." And when I didn't she said "I'm not going to watch." She said "I can't watch because I have a terrible feeling something is going to happen.

Michael: So she didn't watch.

Bob: She didn't watch no.

Michael: Alright so you feel short.

Bob: Yep.

Michael: And what happened?

Bob: And I hit 95 mile an hour dead stop in that stupid lake bank. If I had been 10 feet short I would have probably been okay in the water. The water was pretty deep and if I'd been long naturally I'd been good.

Michael: Did you go unconscious?

Bob: Oh yeah I was unconscious for a week. They didn't expect me to live.

Michael: For a week you broke your back, did you break other bones too?

Bob: No that's all I broke was my back.

Michael: And then you woke up a week later.

Bob: I woke up a week later and I was in intensive care and I was full life support and when I woke up they pulled that thing out of my throat, my throat was really sore and everything. I asked the doctor I said "Why?" I didn't even know why I was there? And he said "You were in a motorcycle accident." And I started thinking motorcycle accident, what kind of motorcycle accident? He said "Well when you were jumping the lake. And then I started remembering that I was supposed to do the lake jump but I didn't remember doing it, still don't remember it to this day.

Michael: You don't even remember going down.

Bob: No not at all. He said "You were hurt really bad and that's why you're in this room." And I said "Well am I going to be okay?" He says "Well I don't really know for sure." I say "I feel like somebody cut my legs off. Did I break my legs up?" And he says "No they're there." I said "Are you sure?" And he pulled the sheet down and he pulled my feet up in front of me "They're here." I said "How come I can't feel them?" He says "Well" he didn't want to really tell me. He says "You had some type of an injury that it made you kind of numb down there."

Michael: But he knew right then.

Bob: Yeah well he didn't know - well now I'm going to get into a really good part of this story I'm glad you asked me about this. Well let me just tell you the story. They take me out of intensive care and they put me in a private room. I actually got hurt the 25th and I woke up seven days later. So they had me on every kind of drug known to mankind because I was so bruised. I was bruised from the bottom of my toes to underneath my lower ribs. My whole body was black and blue, the injury was so severe I mean I hit so hard. So I was really scared. I was 28-years-old I was at the peak of my career, I got my whole life ahead of me and I'm wondering what in the world is going on with this I'm going to get better or not. And I didn't know what to do. And believe it or not I had two or three of my good friends that particular year they were talking to me about Jesus. You know how that is you just kind of blow it off like "Well yeah, that sounds good but I don't really have time for that right now.

When they took me in the operating about 6:30 or 7:00 in the morning and I was in there and I was scared to death I didn't know

what in the world they were going to do and what was going to happen. They showed me the pictures, they showed me the x-rays that my spinal cord was severed. They showed that my thoracic nine and ten was completely shattered that they had to go in there and take those bones out put in some metal rods and get me to where I could be stable and I would have to learn how to get around in a wheelchair. Well it scared me to death.

Michael: They showed all that to you in the room.

Bob: They showed it to me in the room.

Michael: Were you just in disbelief?

Bob: I was scared. I was petrified. The anesthesiologist says to me, he says "Well" he says "Are you ready to go?" And I said "Ready to go. What do you mean?" He said "I'm ready to shoot the juice to you." He said "They're going to do about four or five hours worth of surgery on you." So I'm not kidding you Michael I closed and I said "Lord if you're really there I don't read the bible, I don't know anything at all about you. I said "But all my friends are trying to get me to go to this way." I said "If you're really there I need you now and I don't know what else to do, I'm scared to death, I can't fix myself", because I'm always a fixer, I'm a fix it myself type guy. And all of a sudden I get this real wonderful warm gracious feeling over me like everything's going to be okay. And I open my eyes up and I said to the anesthesiologist that "I'm ready now."

And it seemed like a minute went by and I wake up in the recovery room and my doctor is sitting next to my bed on me sitting right next to me. And I wake up and I look at him and I go "How did everything go?" He said "It was a miracle." I go "What do you mean it was a miracle?" He said "Well we put you on the operating table, we rolled you over like a little bridge they had me on to where they could do back surgery. So we planned on five or six hours. We went in there and your spinal cord was no longer severed. We're looking at the x-rays right up there in front of our face and we're looking at your body and you're thoracic nine and ten is not destroyed, your spinal cord is not severed, and all I can say is "I can't promise you but there's a possibility that you'll be able to walk again." And I go "Oh my God he answered my prayer." And he says "I can't promise you" he says "But one thing I can tell you, you have a whole lot better shot now than you had then before you went in there." And he said "I don't know what happened."

Michael: Was your wife in there with you or your girlfriend?

Bob: She was down in the chapel praying for me the whole time. She thought I was going to be in there five or six hours. She was still down there.

Michael: Who called her?

Bob: I wasn't sure the doctors called her when I woke up.

Michael: Yeah.

Bob: So she came to room and they told her what they had found and why I had only been in there for so short a time and she was in tears, I mean she was absolutely in tears. So that was my first encounter with being a Christian and I have been a Christian since then. And later on down time Gene Sullivan and I we met in the Cal Palace in 1971.

Michael: Mention who Gene Sullivan is.

Bob: Gene used to be Evel Knievel's bodyguard, he was his very first bodyguard '69 to '72 I believe it was, and he was just a real big guy, big muscular guy, still is. I mean he's tall and he's just strong as an ox and he was Evel's bodyguard. And then finally after a couple of years of dealing with Evel and everything and all the menagerie that goes with working with him and he said that the Lord called him one time and told him that he wanted to use him in the ministry and he wanted him to be with the Lord. And Gene didn't know what to do with that. But you got saved and he told Evel that he was not going to do that anymore with him and he was going to start his own ministry and he was going to be jumping for Jesus. And that's how the whole thing started.

And then the press asked him "Why are you leaving Evel Knievel?" And he says "Because I'm departing from evil and I'm going with Jesus." And Evel got real mad at him and wouldn't talk to him for, I don't know, 35 or 36 years until '07 when we were at Evel Days. Gene came up to that and I hadn't seen Gene in 36 years I think or 35 years and we got back together just like brothers. But Evel and Gene got to be really buddy-buddy and then all of a sudden Evel called Gene up one morning and says "I had an encounter with the Lord myself." He said "I was in Daytona Beach" and he said "The Lord came to me and was talking to me." And so Evel accepted the Lord in Daytona. And then called Robert Schuler's Crystal Cathedral and Robert Schuler didn't think that that's who he was.

Michael: Oh so Evel called Robert Schuler.

Bob: Yes. Yes.

Michael: Do the naysayers think it was an attempt for him to kind of get back in the media?

Bob: No, no, no, it was a real deal. Evel called me that morning. I was the first person that Evel called. Evel called me and he told me he says "Bob I got something to tell you because I've never experienced anything like I have." He says "But I found Jesus." And I go "God Evel like everybody's been praying for you for years." And he told me how it all happened.

Michael: How did it happen?

Bob: Well he said he was in Daytona Beach and he was in the hotel room and he said the Lord came in front of him and told him that he was a sinner and that he wanted to save him and he wanted him to follow Jesus. And Evel was in shock. I mean he said he really had an encounter with the Lord. He said "That the demons were all around and trying to get him not to do it and he told the demons "To leave him, to depart from him." And he said "They left and he accepted Jesus as his Savior." And that's how that whole thing started. Then he started calling all his friends. And I was the first one that's what Evel told me anyway, he said "I was the first one, Gene Sullivan was the second one." And when he called Gene he asked to pray for him and everything. And then he called Robert Schuler and Schuler didn't believe him he thought it was a big publicity stunt. He got on an airplane and flew to Tampa and met with Evel and then went and had dinner together.

Michael: He had known of him but had he known.

Bob: He knew about Robert Schuler because his Crystal Cathedral and that was why he wanted to do that. And that's normal for Evel he wouldn't have went to just a little normal pastor...

Michael: Yeah he went big.

Bob: ...he went big time and he wanted the world to know that he had received Jesus as his Savior and that's what he wanted to do. And then after it was all over with and he lived another year I called up people that he had really screwed in the ground and apologized to them. He tried to make himself alright with everybody.

- Michael: How about that Shielding guy?
- Bob: I don't know how that went? I think Gene knows something about how that went I think that there were some conversation in that. I mean Evel didn't tell me that particularly.
- Michael: What was the deal with that? I mean he wrote a nasty book but was it the truth?
- Bob: The part that Evel got mad about even though he was so unfaithful to his wife Linda, which he was...
- Michael: She stuck with him over all those years.
- Bob: Yes she stuck with him through the whole thing. And Linda's a real good Christian girl and she's still one of my best friends.
- Michael: She knew what was going on.
- Bob: Sure she did.
- Michael: But she loved him.
- Bob: But she had hoped that something good would come out of it. But anyway this guy wrote in the book that Linda was a whore and that her Christian thing was a big fake and all this kind of stuff. So that's what really made Evel mad. Even though that he cheated on her he still loved and respected her in a weird way. Some people love people really weirdly, well that's kind of what he did. And he had just broke his arm I believe in Detroit when he jumped over those sharks and he fell and hit the camera and broke his arm so he only had one arm. So he took a baseball bat with him and he was going to beat this guy up. Well he did.
- Michael: Did you know he was going to do this?
- Bob: No. He never told anybody he just did it. Then they sent him to one of those prisons where it's like a resort prison they don't keep you in bars they keep you in a room and you get a big TV and all that kind of crap. And you can go out during the day but you got to be back at a certain time and stuff like that. But when he went to court the judge said "He had heard both sides of the story and everything and I guess he kind of felt a little bad for Evel, and he said to Evel he says "Mr. Knievel stand up". He said "I want to make a statement to you." And Evel stands up. And he says "I kind of understand where you're coming from in this whole issue

and you were hurt and you were mad and your wife what was said about her and all like that.” He says “But I think that maybe I’d like to ask you one final question.” And Evel says “What is it?” He said “Well if you had to do it all over again would you have done it?” And Evel said “I’d kill the son-of-a-bitch.” And the judge just slammed the hammer down and he says “Six months in jail.

If he would have said “I was really emotionally upset and I didn’t really know what I was doing and I really felt bad about it, yeah I would not have done it”, he’d let him walk. But he had to be Evel Knievel.

Michael: Alright so let’s get back. You had your first experience, your first miracle. How long were you in the hospital for?

Bob: I was in the hospital from August 25th until October 2nd.

Michael: Okay so what was going on between that time, I mean obviously with sponsors the business was obviously stopped?

Bob: Well yeah the business was stopped we knew it was over. I realized that a miracle had been performed on me but I didn’t know to what degree and I didn’t know how long it was going to be. The doctor said “If we hadn’t seen the x-rays before and went in there we would say you probably are experiencing spinal shock. And spinal shock is like what happens to you like, say somebody shoots a bullet and it goes through your body and it bypasses the spinal cord but it doesn’t really hit the spinal cord goes like whoa man, something’s going on here, we better shut down everything. That goes in automatic shutdown and they call it Spinal Shock.

Michael: Right but it’s not severed.

Bob: It’s not severed. He said “Well maybe because of the fact your spinal cord is now no longer severed it’s got a compression fracture it looks like you landed really hard and it compressed the vertebrae and it did some damage to the outside of the spinal cord. It’s a good possibility that that could heal and that you’ll be okay.”

Michael: But your spine was not severed, still not severed.

Bob: I mean according to the x-rays it was but after the Lord healed me no.

Michael: Well have you had an x-ray since then?

Bob: Oh yeah.

Michael: Did you see the spinal cord in an x-ray?

Bob: If you seen me you would never believe that the age that I am and the small amount of things that are wrong with me, I mean I have hardly anything wrong with me other than the fact I can't walk.

Michael: You're 64 yeah you look young. Can an MRI see your spinal cord all the way through?

Bob: The MRI can see everything.

Michael: So you've seen an MRI in the last five years or 10 years.

Bob: Oh yeah.

Michael: And it's all intact.

Bob: It's all intact yeah. It would have to be intact like my autonomic nervous system is all intact. You can take and tap me on the knees and my legs will jump out.

Michael: Oh really.

Bob: Oh yeah.

Michael: So your injury how common is that compared to other spinal cord injuries?

Bob: Well I mean originally I mean I was a disaster. I was all shattered and severed and compressed and mashed up and a gigantic mess. Now I would say that I'm like somebody that jumps off a three story building and landed on their feet or landed on their butt and did a compression fracture and that's about what it's like it's called An Incomplete Injury it means that the spinal cord is not cut but it's not functioning. And why is it not functioning well they're not too sure. It's probably got some scare tension in it maybe the nerves can't get through. Even in this world of today they really don't know for sure exactly what's going on. But my doctor in France Dr. Bohbot he does a thing called Laser Puncture it's a treatment almost like acupuncture but instead of using a needle he uses a laser and the laser penetrates through the scar tissue and starts giving you a return and it's about a two year project.

Michael: Have you done two years in it?

Bob: No, no I haven't done any of it with him yet. The reason why I haven't done it is because I really wanted to use it as a tool to promote my Jet Trike project. I want to be able to start getting better from it like Bohbot told me if I go to France and spend two weeks there and do treatments for two weeks and then go away and do my PR and do my Jet Trike thing and go back and forwards, back and forwards he says "It'll probably take two or three years" but he says "We're going to get you healed."

Michael: And has he healed other people on your situation?

Bob: He knows a lot about me and he's seen my MRI. I mean he knows about my health conditions. He knows everything about me.

Michael: He says "If anyone can do it your situation would be..."

Bob: I'm going to be like his poster child.

Michael: That would be sweet.

Bob: And my foundation we're starting that.

Michael: Tell us the name of your foundation.

Bob: Its real simple the [www.BobGillFoundation.org](http://www.BobGillFoundation.org). It was setup for spinal cord recovery and repair. And every since I've known about Dr. Bohbot I wanted to raise money for that to happen. Not just so much for me but I want it to be a multimillion dollar foundation so that we can take people, underprivileged people that don't have the money that could get healed by spinal cord injury, to send them there for free. That's what we want to do we want to build a big hospital in France because the technology that he uses the French government gave him the grant money to build this machine but the stipulation was he can't take it out of the country.

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Michael: How many years has he been doing this?

Bob: I think it was like the mid 80s.

Michael: Was he allowed to treat patients?

- Bob: He's treated about 500 of them so far.
- Michael: And what are some of the stories you've heard?
- Bob: Great stories man.
- Michael: People, who couldn't walk, walk again.
- Bob: Yes and even the ones that didn't get to walk completely got better like the spinal injury problem and bladder and stuff, all those issues that go along with spinal cord injury all that goes away almost immediately.
- Michael: Have you talked to some of his patients?
- Bob: I have texted them and email him back and forth. Yeah most of them don't even speak English they're all from France and Germany and he treats pretty much all the people over there.
- Michael: How much funding did the government give them?
- Bob: He never told me how much they gave him but it was enough to build the machine and do the R&D on it.
- Michael: I got a guy I interviewed I'll send you the interviews, he was one of the very first people he had the New England Institute of Laser. What this guy got into he was in lasers back in the, I think it was the 80s. He was doing tattoo removal and he was working for a hospital and the hospital needed money they were going broke. He brought in and developed a whole laser program within the hospital and they were using all these lasers. This guy is the man when it comes to lasers and laser technology.
- Bob: Right.
- Michael: He speaks all over the world does marketing. I'll let you listen to these interviews it may be an interesting connection. It was dealing with [Candelas] one of the biggest laser manufacturers in the world and this technology is just growing so fast, you know what I'm saying?
- Bob: You know what I'd like to do I'd like to send that interview to Dr. Bohbot and let him listen to it.

Michael: Yeah I'll send it to you first, you listen to it. I was interviewing more for the marketing but his story was just incredible. So I'll get that to you.

Bob: That sounds really good.

Michael: So this guy he's still treating patients over there.

Bob: Oh yeah. He has a very small hospital and he's very limited on funds and stuff, but he's a big, big speaker around the world. He goes to all these big consortiums, these medical things where they do stem cells plants and he's married himself to the world. They all know who he is. He gets all kinds of awards everywhere he goes.

Michael: So this stuff is just incredible. Like Christopher Reeves what's all the stuff he was looking at?

Bob: He was dealing with the wrong people. He was dealing in the United States and the United States is more into drugs and doctors than they are into fixing things. They don't want to fix anything they want to just give you stuff so they can make a ton of money on it. And he was dealing with that Miami Institute down there Miami Walks, or whatever it is, and those guys are limited to what they can do because our government won't let them fix it. Just like cancer, I mean you can go to Mexico. Mexico is the Number 1 country in the world for getting rid of cancer and you got to go down there to get treated you can't do it here. They tell you that they're learning this and they're spending all this money on...

Michael: No I'm with you. Have you seen some of my new health interviews on my site?

Bob: No.

Michael: I've bought the rights to about 40 interviews from a lady who's interviewing some of the Number 1 health experts around the world some of the best selling stuff there's all kinds of really cool stuff. If you just go to the front page of [www.HardToFindSeminars.com](http://www.HardToFindSeminars.com) you scroll down and you'll see this banner for health interviews. I'm slowly getting them up there. When I heard about you I was thinking to call her. I asked my editor, because she's been doing all the editing, I go "Have you heard anything on spinal cord injury" and she can't remember. I don't think we have anything on that but this laser guy maybe a good thing for you to listen to.

Bob: Yeah.

- Michael: So this guy doesn't have the funds and you want to get some money to promote this thing.
- Bob: Exactly.
- Michael: So how were you doing? I'm sure you weren't doing well, did you get depressed?
- Bob: Nope I never went through that.
- Michael: Awesome. Do a lot of people who lose their ability to walk, like from what you know, do they go through that?
- Bob: They not only go through depression they also go through suicide.
- Michael: So the mental stuff is really brutal.
- Bob: I went to the rehab in Rancho Hospital which is in Downey California and that's where I went for my rehab there was 62 or 63 of us in there at the time. This hospital Rancho was big it got its notoriety from polio not from spinal cord injury. And they kind of took on spinal cord and they didn't really know the right hand from the left hand in there, it was really terrible. It was a bad place to go. They just screwed around with us and it was terrible but they did. They were very negative. They didn't want to make us think that we'd ever walk again they always put negative things in our head. They were very, very yucky about the whole thing. I was very disappointed with the whole hospital I'd wasted my money there. The only thing that was good about it was I learned how to get around in my wheelchair better and I did learn how to jump over curves.
- And back in the 70s there were no ramps anywhere you either had to stay home or learn how to deal with the circumstances. And I did learn some things from that but other than that they were very negative. They used to send me to a psychologist twice a week because they said I couldn't accept my injury. I kept telling them "I want to get better man, I'm getting better" and they didn't want to hear that. They were afraid that somebody else might have heard me say that. So it was a mess.
- Michael: So that was where you had to do your rehab.
- Bob: Yeah.

Michael: How long was that?

Bob: I was in there from Groundhog Day until the 1st or 2nd of April which was way, way too long. I needed to be there like a hole in the head. I pretty much had it all figured out before I went there. Everything I learned they pooh-poohed and told me I learned it wrong. But unfortunately their way didn't seem to work there as well as my way did. They treated us like we were a bunch of little kids if we did something wrong they take our wheelchair away and make us stay in bed.

Michael: Oh that's terrible.

Bob: That was...

Michael: Do you think that stuff goes on though all over the country?

Bob: I think it does yeah.

Michael: Alright so you said suicide, what's the suicide rate?

Bob: Of the people that were there, and I was there for that timeframe I told you, seven of them have went home and committed suicide.

Michael: Wow!

Bob: And the big thing that really is a rocker is when guys get hurt or girls either way your spouse ends up leaving you in a very short period of time because they can see that there's a lot of work involved and the sex situation is really pretty sad usually. It didn't affect me any but it affects 99% of them it screws around with them. And the women they can't do the things to them that they used to be able to do to them and they end up running off with your best friend or something. That happens to a couple of situations where the guy went home and they found their wife in bed with one of their friends and they either went in the garage and blew their brains out or they shot them and they went out and shot themselves or something I mean it was always some controversy about was going on. It never made it in the newspaper, the newspaper never printed stuff like that, but we knew all what was going on being in there in the hospital.

Michael: Did your girlfriend stay with you?

Bob: Well I had a real problem with that. After I got back from West Virginia and went to Florida Jan went back with me and every time I

would wake up in the night she'd be crying. And I'd said to her I say "Honey, what's wrong? It's all going to be okay." And she said "No it's not going to be okay and all the things that we did and all we can't do that anymore" and it was a real pity party thing. And I told her I say "In all honesty as much as I love you and I hate to see you go" I said "You need to go back to where your family is and get over this whole thing and see what happens." So that was the end of our relationship.

Michael: Have you talked to her since?

Bob: I've talked to her only one time and that was in 1977 that was the last time I talked to her.

Michael: So were you back with your family? Who was supporting you when you went back?

Bob: Well when I back after Jan left I spent two months with a real good friend of mine, then I flew to California and went to Rancho Hills Las Vegas and when I got out of there I started a motorcycle jumper and that's what I was doing. It was actually a kite cycle. The same guy Doug Malawiki that built Evel's Sky Cycle built this thing and he called the Kite Cycle. And I was booking him and using my sponsors to get that whole thing off the ground and going. And pretty soon the guy that we had flying it he turned into being a real jerk. He just couldn't handle success. He just was, oh I don't know what in the world would you call somebody like him.

Michael: He had an ego.

Bob: A gigantic ego and I couldn't deal with him. When we were in Florida and we jumped down in Florida I just told him I said "I'm done. You guys go on your own." He ended up trying two 18 wheelers and didn't get high enough on the takeoff ramp and crash in the back of it and broke himself up really bad. And then he stays in the hospital I think three or four months. And then when he left the hospital he forgot to pay them and he didn't care about anything or anybody it was all about him.

Michael: Your previous sponsors were they supportive of you at all?

Bob: Yeah they were. The biggest tearjerker of them all, well the Navy was really hard getting away from them that was really hard.

Michael: What do you mean?

Bob: Well I mean I wanted to be with them.

Michael: It was hard not being with them.

Bob: Yeah hard not being with them. And then Kawasaki Don Wiggles flew me out to LA and we went in a board meeting, everybody in the room was all Japanese except for Don and I and they were all the guys that approved my thing and all were excited about it and were all in love with me and everybody was in tears. And Don was the only one that spoke real good English and he just said "What they're all saying is that we realize that you were such an asset to us" and he said that "We use to always tease back at the home office that you used to have green blood flowing through your veins because Kawasaki Green and all." And he said "We hate losing you but what we have to do we have to do for a business decision." We can't continue to have you going around with the Navy promoting Kawasaki safety in a wheelchair that aint going to fly and we can't have your pictures up in our Kawasaki shops anymore because when little Johnny comes in with mom to buy a motorcycle and the guy that's promoting your deal is in a wheelchair that aint going to fly." And they just said "We hate to do it but we're going to have to cut you lose."

Michael: But you understood that though.

Bob: Oh I surely understood it, but it was still a tearjerker.

Michael: Oh I'm sure it was hard.

Bob: We were all crying just like little babies and it was really sad. The Navy tried to play with me a little bit during the time. I mean I had a couple of things they would come to town and they would invite me there and go out in a big boat ride or something. I mean before I got hurt they were going to put me in a submarine they were going to fly me on an airplane and land on an aircraft carrier. I was like a big toy to the Navy they had a lot of fun with me.

Michael: Well back then you don't have the internet and stuff but were you trying to find solutions so you can walk again?

Bob: Yes I was but everywhere you go it was negative. Nobody knew anything and nobody cared. Anytime you went to any type of neurosurgeon they said "Well you haven't got it back yet it aint going to happen." Usually spinal shock lasts six months and you have to believe that it aint going to happen. And I never have believed that I believed all along that I'm going to get well. And in a

conversation that I had with Gene Sullivan recently, probably within the last couple of months, I told him I said “You know what Gene” I says “I really think - and I said “The way the Lord works he works in ways in his own time, he doesn’t work it in our time.” I said “But you and I hit it off real good as friends in 1971 at Cal Palace. We’re away from each other for 36 years we both go different directions do different things. I became real successful in what I did he became successful in his Jump for Jesus Tour and around the world and did all these things.” I said “But yet we get hooked up again at Evel Days because of Evel Knievel of all people to hook us up.” And I said “I’ve become a Christian since then” and naturally he became one. And Evel wasn’t one at the time that he got us all hooked up.” And I said “It’s a strange world.” And I said “I really do believe that our Lord has got me in this wheelchair, not because he can’t rise me out if it because he can, I mean he healed my shoulders in a split second.

Michael: Tell me about the shoulder thing. Alright your shoulders were killing you.

Bob: I was having rotator cup problems.

Michael: When did your shoulders really start bothering you? How many years?

Bob: This past year Gene Sullivan asked me when I was living in Phoenix he came to Phoenix. Spanky Spangler he’s a big car jumper guy and he came to Phoenix to help Spanky with his show. And all these guys all want Gene to come and play from them, I mean that’s what they all wanted him to do. So Gene and I we went down to the auditorium and Spanky was there and everything and after it was over with Gene said to me “Bob what do you think about traveling with Jump for Jesus this year?” This was last year last winter. And I said “Wow.” I said “That’s an honor that you would ask me to do something like that.” I said “Yeah I would love to do it. What do you want me to do?” He said “Well we’ll figure out something for you to do. We’ll have you light the fire or something and have you be out there with us and we can all pray together and make this thing really happen.” So I say “Okay I would love to do that.”

So this is really crazy. I mean you have to really spiritually believe that make you think I’m not telling you a bunch of crap, but no more than the time that Gene asked me to do that I took him to the airport at 4:00 in the morning and on my way home I’d never had any trouble with my van at all. My heater coil goes bad, all my

water runs out of my van, it's like the devils going like "You're not going there. We're not going to let you go there." So I get that fixed and there's one thing after another, battery goes bad, all the data goes bad. I finally go back to Florida my transmission goes bad. I'm trying to get ready to go to Billings to come up here with Gene for the tour. My whole trip it took me 10 days of breakdowns and hand controls going bad, everything to get me here.

Michael: Just to get to where Gene was.

Bob: Yeah to where Gene was. So instead of me turning around and quitting go like "Hey man this must be the long route to take. I pursued it because I felt like the devil was really working on me and I know that's what it was." So I get here and then we go on tour together and I see what makes Jump for Jesus work and I do all these things. And I go over to Gene's house, and this was back in September, and I went over and I said "Gene my shoulders are killing me man, I mean I can't lay on my right side at night, I can't lie on my left side, I get tears in my eyes. Sometimes it hurts so bad my fingers get tingly numb they're just killing me I hurt so bad" and I said "Is there anything you think you can do about this?" Because I'm seeing him heal people all the time in the ministry on tour, I mean tremendous healings are going on. So he says "I'll tell you what, I'll see what I can do." And it's almost like you saying "Ah I'll give God a call and see what he wants to do."

Michael: Okay.

Bob: So I come home, and this was on a Saturday, and on Sundays in the summertime when we're home here at the ministry we have a great big tent out back and all the people from town that all belong here they come and Gene preaches and we're all there. And it was three baptisms that day, they baptized three guys, and I'm sitting up there in the front with Gene and I sit at the front table with him. And he says "The Holy Spirit just told me to pray for Bob." He tells the whole congregation that. So they all get up out of their chairs they all circle around me. Gene comes over and lays his hands on me and he prays for the Lord to heal me. Instantly just like a bolt of lightning went right through the top of me all the way to the bottom and my arms are perfect.

Michael: Did he put his hand on your head?

Bob: He put some oil on his hands and he rubbed it on my head.

Michael: On your forehead.

Bob: On my forehead and he prayed to Jesus that he would heal me. And he put his hand down both of my arms and both of y shoulders and the pain went right away, right away immediately.

Michael: Wow.

Bob: I've been absolutely perfect since then.

Michael: That's incredible. You know it's hard for people to believe that. It sounds like "Yeah sure."

Bob: It would be different if I were the one in the audience.

Michael: I believe you I do.

Bob: Well, I mean I want you to believe me. And Michael I don't know you very well but I feel like I've know you a long time...

Michael: Yeah.

Bob: ...because of our conversation. I mean you know how that gets.

Michael: Yeah.

Bob: You kind of hit it off with somebody and you really get to like them. And I'm kind of like that up here with these guys in ministry there's about 30 families up here and they're like a family I never had. We all help each other do all kinds of things and I'm a big computer network technician and I repair everybody's computers for them and I do all their work for them and I don't charge anybody anything, I'm just thankful that the Lord has taken good care of me. And that's what my life is all about. So Gene I told him I says "You know what" I said "I really do believe that the Lord has got me in this wheelchair for a reason." And I said "I know he can rise me at any moment. You have proven to me and what happened to me in the hospital that he is capable of doing anything, absolutely anything."

Michael: I believe it.

Bob: So I do believe that. I believe that he's getting more mileage out of me in the wheelchair. And with knowing that in my heart I feel comfortable, I'm fine with that. I don't have a problem, I don't go around going "Oh I wish I could walk, the Lord is being really cruel to me not letting me walk. He can do it but he won't do it." I don't

do that because I know he's using me. Not to change the subject but to take you on a little trip and it will take five minutes. In September I left here to go back to Florida to get my stuff out of storage and kind of see some of my friends. I really don't want to go back there anymore I just don't want to. I feel like I'm not home when I'm not in Billings. I mean I'm glad to travel with Gene I felt like this is my new home.

So I'm down there and I'm hanging out with my friends and I got a couple of old girlfriends down there I got to see and there's this real great sports bar I go to, I'm a big Dallas Cowboys fan. And [inaudible 0:50:13] used to play for the Cowboys for eight years and he owns one and we all hang out together and we're doing good, but I felt empty in my heart. I felt really empty there. And I called gene up and I said to him I said "Gene, can I come home? I want to come back." He says "It's going to be wintery. He says "You hate the cold." And I do I mean I was cold in the summertime up here. I said "I don't care." I said "I just want to come back to Billings I don't feel right here. I feel like I'm in somebody else's house." And he says "Well yeah." He says "You're very welcome to come back. We've got a couple of houses around here and this house that I live in is a big five bedroom house and I have one of the bedrooms, and it's a beautiful house." And he gives me this room and all these things and we're all like a big family.

Michael: Does Gene live that too?

Bob: No Gene has another house two blocks from here bigger than this one is.

Michael: Who's in the house with you?

Bob: There's a family downstairs that have two little children and one brand new it's probably like six months old. And then across from me is Lloyd and Betty Sorter who actually is the head of the house. And the people next to me Dave and Susie Gentlemen they're from California.

Michael: Are they all with the ministry?

Bob: Yep.

Michael: Okay so you guys all travel around.

Bob: Yeah. So that's what we do.

Michael: That sounds fun.

Bob: Let me tell you the last thing. So I'm leaving Florida. I told Gene I want to come up there. And so I'm leaving Florida and I'm having a problem with my fuel regulator in my van and I'm getting terrible gas mileage. But I'm trying to leave on schedule. My mechanic that was going to fix it for me got sick that morning and couldn't fix it so there's the devil playing a game with me again.

Michael: How far of a drive is it to Billings?

Bob: Twenty-eight hundred miles. So I leave and I go to see my son in Mobile, Alabama. So I drive Mobile, I'm getting terrible gas mileage I said to my son Owen "Do you have any friends around her that know a mechanic or a good mechanic?" He says "Well that's this one guy that did some work for me." And he says "Okay." And I got there on a Friday and he's not going to be open until Monday and I wanted to spend a weekend with my son. So my son goes back to work and I go to the guys place and when I get there he had told me on the phone he'd take me right away, because I'm on my way to Billings I don't want to stay there forever. And when I get there he says "Well, I can't work on it until two or three cars are done. It'll probably be 10:30 or 11:00 I just can't do it." I said "Well I can't wait that long I'll just get it done the next stop when I'm in Memphis I was going to go to Memphis."

So I'm driving away and I'm riding down the road. After all this time riding with Gene and seeing the miracles that he performs, I mean it's off the hook you just have no idea. So I thought to myself besides Gene Sullivan it's the way the Lord uses him. It's not Gene with the power God goes through him and does all these things. So I'm riding along and I'm going "You know what Lord." I said "I have all the faith in the world in you and you have performed so many miracles for me and the devil's really pounding on me again and I just want to rebuke him and make him go away. But I need your help because I don't know of anybody to fix this thing." I said "I don't know whether you can fix cars or not." I said "I know you can fix bodies and I've seen you stopped the wind, I've seen you make the rain go around us where one time we jumped there was only one hole in the sky and it was where Gene was jumping at. So I know the Lord wants this to happen."

So I'm riding along and I ask him I said "If there's anything you can do to help me with this thing I'd really appreciate it" and I just kind of blew it off." Well I never paid a lot of attention to my gas I was paying attention to where I was going. When you leave Mobile

there's a lot of roads you got to take and all to get to where you're going. And I finally stop and I get gas and I put the gas in and now I'm going write down my gas mileage just to see how bad this thing is. It went from five miles a gallon to 16. It's amazing so I know where it's coming from, so I'm not doubting that, I know I ask the Lord for this favor and he did it for me. So the next time I get gas I'm up to 17 miles a gallon. When this van was brand new I got 15 now I'm at 16. So I'm getting better gas mileage now after 300,000 miles on the stupid thing. I keep it in good shape but I mean it's still old you know. And I'm going along and then now when I get out in Oklahoma the wind really picks up and it's blowing really hard. And it's snowing and its cold and everything and the fastest I can get my van to go is about 55 miles an hour and that's at full throttle and now my gas mileage is going in the toilet again because of the fact that I'm running full throttle.

So I ride along and I'm going alright Lord I'm not trying to test you by any means I just want to get to Billings. I said "I had a lot of trouble the last time" and I know that you can fix this problem." I said "I just ask you to give peace to the wind." That's what Jesus said in the bible about the weather when he was in the big ship when it was about to get shipwrecked he said "*I want peace in the water, peace in the wind*" and it all stopped. So I said "Well if the Lord really does say that we do have his power if we believe it I'm going to believe it." And I said "Lord I asked you to stop the wind." I'm not kidding you Michael, as soon as I said that it stopped dead. I went all the way from Oklahoma City back to Billings without any problems whatsoever. I got there in record time. I get the best gas mileage I've ever got in my van. And so yes the Lord is doing great things for me. Is he making me walk? No. Is that okay with me? Yes. I'm fine with that. Maybe he wants me to develop this hospital, maybe he wants me to use laser puncture to show the world that this works, that this doctor can do this stuff. His game plan I can't figure it out nobody can figure it out. But I have all the faith in the world in that and that's who I am and that's what I'm all about.

Michael: No that's what it's all about. You've heard of Napoleon Hill.

Bob: Oh yeah.

Michael: There's a story about his son was born death. And Napoleon Hill he had such a wonderful attitude and he knew that his son would hear.

Bob: It's a documentary out on that and I watched it. I watched it here in Billings. I think I watched it before I left the first time.

Michael: You know it was only when the technology for hearing aids came about but the kid went to normal schools, he wouldn't treat them as a deaf child at all...

Bob: Right.

Michael: He treated him as a normal kid. He just knew it he absolutely knew that he would hear again.

Bob: Yep.

Michael: And then when hearing aids came - I mean look at the technology is just unbelievable what's happening man.

Bob: It is. It's off the hook.

Michael: There's real possibility you're going to walk again.

Bob: Yeah I really do believe it. I've believed it all along, no one's ever going to convince me I'm not. I'm totally under the believe and understanding that it's going to be the Lord's will when it happens it's not going to be my will. And when he gets done using me and if he wants to use me to develop these hospitals and make this whole program work and we can take underprivileged children and athletes and whatever and set them there and it cost them nothing to be treated so be it I want that to happen. And I know that the Lord will give me the money for it if that's what he wants to do.

Michael: Alright you got to tell me about this new project Back in the Game. What are you talking about Back in the Game?

Bob: Back in the Game is the Jet Trike.

Michael: What is a Jet Trike? Where did this idea come from? What the hell are you getting into?

Bob: Okay Evel Days '07 I'm sitting a round table at one of the hotel bars in Butte during Evel Days. Robbie Knievel's at the table, Doug Danger. Doug Danger is the motorcycle jumper from Massachusetts jump a gigantic amount of distance one time and made a big name for himself. And then he did short jump and got hurt and almost got killed. Wally Madison and there was another kid that does this real high dirt pile jump thing. Anyway we're all

sitting around the table and - oh Lou Rocket Ray he's the guy that did the firewall crashes in Evel Days - anyway we're all sitting around the table and I said to the guys I said "You know what, you guys are all out there living my dream. You're all jumping motorcycles and all and I come here to watch you guys do it and I want to do it so bad I want to do something really cool. And Doug Dangers says "Well I got a four wheel condo with a jet engine on it." I say "What do you mean you got a four wheel jet?" And he says "Yeah." He says "But it's really ratty." He says "Sometimes it won't shut off I'm afraid the things going to take me 200 miles an hour and I'm going to crash and get killed. And I said "Well why don't we develop that thing and let me do that and I can do that here at Evel Days nor do some places?" He said "Oh no, no, no." He said "That thing is too crazy." So the guy that used to have it he got killed doing something on jumping a four wheeler and his wife gave this to me it was with a project that he was working on." And he said "The thing's crazy."

So let me tell you how the story went, how I got inside of this. We all decided that this was a bad deal for me and that aint going to work. The type of personality I am I got excited about it so I just didn't really share it with them. I thought there's got to be a way to make this happen. So on my way back down to Southern California I had my girlfriend Chantal with me she's a reality TV producer. I broke up with her a couple of years ago she just drives me crazy with her Hollywood mentality. But anyway she was with me and I told her what I wanted to do. I want to live in Las Vegas and I want to see if I can go to the casinos and generate some money and see if I can't get me some money to build this Jet Trike and I could do all these crazy things and promote my foundation with it and you'd be my promoter for the foundation.

So I stopped in Vegas, put her on an airplane and flew her back to Hollywood. And I lived there for about six months trying to put the thing together. I got this one lady came in my life to help me she claimed that she knew all these people and she was really just a scam artist.

Michael: This is in Vegas right.

Bob: Yeah.

Michael: How long ago were you in Vegas? When were you living there?

Bob: Two winters ago.

- Michael: Who is this lady who's trying to scam you?
- Bob: You know I don't even remember her name. Her name was Elizabeth something I forget what it was but she was psychic and I didn't know that for a while, but those people drive me crazy. So once I found out that she was a psychic and all I told her, I said "Elizabeth" I said "I'm a Christian" and I said "I don't really believe in that stuff." And I said "You don't need to go telling me all that stuff. If you want to believe that stuff that's fine with me." I said "I'm trying to have a business deal with you. If you get me some sponsors let it be at that you don't have to try to sell me on this whole thing."
- Michael: So she claims she could get you sponsored.
- Bob: She said that she knew all these big people. She knew Branson...
- Michael: Yeah.
- Bob: ...the people of the Virgin Airline. All she did is she found these addresses on the internet. She was lying to me the whole time.
- Michael: I have a connection a really cool guy. I've never talked to him but he does interviews just like I do.
- Bob: Yeah.
- Michael: But he's real hooked into Branson.
- Bob: If I could get in front of Richard Branson I know I'd get him to buy into the thing.
- Michael: What we'd have to do is once I get the interview all finished you could contact him and send him the interview just to let him hear the story.
- Bob: Oh that'll be great.
- Michael: This guy named Joe Polish.
- Bob: If you could help me that I would really, really appreciate it, more than you can imagine. But anyway, while this woman is working with me I get this phone call from this guy that I had known a long time. He's a male nurse him and his wife are both nurses and they live in North Carolina and he said "I just got involved in a multilevel company that's selling electricity and it's starting in Dallas." He said

“These guys that are running it are billionaires and they have made a bunch of money in different multilevel cell phone things and all kinds of stuff and they made a bunch of money.” He said “I think that these guys would be really interested in your Jet Trike project.” And I said to him I said “Jim, well hey if they got that kind of money I don’t need billions I just need a few million to make the thing really fly.” And he says “Well let me see what I can do?” So about a week goes by and my phone rings and these guys from Dallas they have all their little executives in a little circle and they’re all on speakerphone and they’re talking to me. They talked to me for an hour and a half and they said “What kind of money are you looking for?” And I told them what I wanted to do I wanted to get a real nice motor coach and have this guy in California Eddie Paul, build me two jet trikes, and just the whole ten yards of what I wanted the trailers and all this stuff.

And I said “I think realistically to get off the ground to get it going and have enough money to survive until the sponsors come I said “Ah about \$10 million.” And they said “Well we think we can handle that. I think that that would be something that we could do, we could write it off.” And I said “We could probably do it through my foundation as a 501(c)3 you get to write the whole thing off.” They said “You were very interested in” and this was around November. So they said “Yeah” they were very interested in.” And this was around November. So they said “Well why don’t we kind of put this on hold until January we all kind of like to kind of take a longtime off of Christmas and you know how these big executives they take three weeks off.” And he said “Then we’ll get back in touch with each other in January, the first part of January.” So I go “Okay that sounds good with me” I’m excited about it. I said “You guys are really for real.” And they go “Yeah.” So I hang up the phone and I’m all excited about it and I go down to Elizabeth and I tell her what’s going on. And she was pretty excited about it but she never said no more about it.

Michael: Now was Elizabeth the psychic one?

Bob: Yeah the psychic. So she said to me “What’s the name of this company.” And I told her and I said “They’re in Dallas.” So she looked them up on the internet. She took one of her psychic letterheads and wrote them a thank you note.

Michael: Oh my God.

Bob: Yes. I thank you though. She said she was my manager and she really thanked them for taking a step forward and doing this kind of

stuff and I didn't know that. And she made a press kit on a copy machine...

Michael: Oh my God.

Bob: pictures on a copy machine kind of a trashy thing there and I know nothing about this. So January comes around the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 15th I hear nothing. I call Jim back and I said "Jim" I said "These guys said they were going to call were they just like pulling my leg?" He said "You don't know what happened?" And I go like "No nobody called me." He said "Do you have a manager named Elizabeth?" And I go "Well she's not like a manager she's trying to help me here in Las Vegas." She got a copy of what it looks like and they said "We're not getting involved in a cult." And they dumped the whole thing.

Michael: Oh boomer.

Bob: Yep. I went over there and I screamed at her. I was so mad. I said "You cost me \$10 million dollars."

Michael: Well, you know what, if they weren't interested there's some other company.

Bob: Well yeah. Yeah I know that. Anyways, that's why that went away.

Michael: That's too bad.

Bob: I mean I really do think Richard Branson would jump on this thing like...

Michael: That sounds like its right up his style.

Bob: Oh it is. And I bet he'd want Eddie to build one that's got two seats in it so he could ride with me. You know how he is he likes to jump off buildings and do all kinds of crazy stuff. Did you see that building he jumped off in Vegas where he banged up against the wall?

Michael: No.

Bob: He had all these tickets in his hands it was the grand opening of one of those hotels and he was up on the top and the wind was blowing like crazy, and Branson he don't care he thinks he can do anything. And he had one of these ropes that would slide him down at a certain speed, he would jump and just keep bouncing his

feet off the wall and come to the bottom while he was going down he was going to through these tickets off.

Michael: Like he was repelling down the building.

Bob: Yeah. Oh I know what it was he was promoting Virgin Airlines Domestic in the United States. That's what it was. He had all the free tickets in his hand and hit the walls so hard with the wind blowing the tickets all bounced out of his hand and they went all over Las Vegas they floated everywhere. But he got all skinned up and everything and that was when I was with Elizabeth and she says "Well I know him we can go down and talk to him about that." And I said to her I said "You know him?" And she said "Yeah I know him." Well" she said to me "Well because of the fact he hit the wall and everything..."

Michael: Yeah.

Bob: that he didn't have time to talk about it." Well it was a bunch of crap. He was just trying to play me. He's was trying to get into a contract is what she was trying to do. Like that \$10 million dollar would have come along and we'd have been in contract she'd have been part of it. So I figured her out.

Michael: That's good.

Bob: One day I went over to Evel and I still have the recordings that he called me back on when he was in Daytona Beach when he was really sick when he was dying. I still have it on my cell phone I redo it about every week. But I was trying to get hold of Evel because I wanted him to help me with this Dr. Bohbot thing because normally its \$300,000 dollars to go over there and I don't have \$300,000 dollars.

Michael: For his treatment.

Bob: Yeah because it takes two years.

Michael: Three hundred grand.

Bob: That's cheap in America. I mean \$300,000 dollars over here doesn't get you nothing. That's a total thing. That's your travel, that's your hotel, that's your physical...

Michael: Can you live there for two years?

Bob: Two years in France for \$300,000 grand to come back walking. They can't offer that anywhere else. So I got Evel and I call him on the phone to start with and he's in Daytona and he's feeling terrible. He calls me back and he says "I feel really bad now but we'll get together when I get back and I'm doing better and I'll help you with it." So he comes back and how about a week go by so I'm getting a little upsetter and I go really steamed to his house and I told him about it. And he says "I got an idea." He says "Is this guy a promoter?" And I go "Well I don't know if he's a promoter or not but he likes to get his name out. I mean he goes to all these conferences around the world. He says "I'm going to write a letter to him on my letterhead, on Evel's letterhead his really cool one, he's got that gold leaf on it and everything; it's really nice. And he says in there "Bob Gill is a good friend of mine and he would really like to walk and he doesn't have the money."

This is before he really thought he was going to die. He says "I'm doing a brand new movie" and he said "I would put you in the movie with Bob." He said "I'm doing four big TV specials that are going to air on ESPN that are going to get millions of people exposure around the world. He said "If you'll treat Bob for no charge he said the medical treatment for you for two years" he said "I will put you on all those shows I just told you about and we'll make you known around the world. So Dr. Bohbot couldn't get back to him fast enough. He sent a FedEx to him and he called back and Dr. Bohbot doesn't speak English he has his secretary speak English.

Michael: Yeah.

Bob: He talks to her and they talk back and forth. He said "Absolutely." And then he sent me a confirmation that I could go over there for free and do the whole thing and everything. So Evel has done some nice things for me.

Michael: Yeah that's very nice. So what happened after that?

Bob: So here's what happened. The first show was going to be in Las Vegas when Mike Metzger he did a back flip and that was in May, May 5 I believe, that was going to be the first one. Evel told me to be sure and be there. He said "They're having me in the ESPN booth and we'll be talking about Dr. Bohbot and we'll show films, we'll do all these kind of things."

Michael: So wait, did Evel have to deliver something first before the doctor would...

Bob: No, no, no, the doctor already approved it. This was already in real time. He already has these things to do. So Chantal and I, she's my girlfriend at the time, we drive across country and we drive all the way to Las Vegas from Florida and we go there. It is 115 degrees and that got the place all fenced off and all the cameras are up and the big screen and everything, and I'm trying to get somebody in ESPN that can let me in because Evel's waiting for me. And I go up there and they said "Well Evel's not here." And I go "What do you mean he's not here?" He called in and said "He's too sick he can't make it." So I had to end up being at the bottom of the takeoff ramp and watching the whole thing. So anyway that flopped. And then the next one was this kid who was going to be jumping at Oklahoma somewhere.

Michael: Did the doctor come in to?

Bob: No, no, no. No let me tell you what happened. So all four of those specials all went in the toilet because Evel was fined and he couldn't go. They dropped the movie deal because he couldn't perform.

Michael: Yeah.

Bob: He couldn't do anything in the movie he wanted to be himself in the movie so that all went in the toilet. So I felt really bad. I'm not a taker I'm a giver guy and I wrote Dr. Bohbot, I wrote him and I told him I says "You know Dr." I says "I am so honored that you would even consider doing this thing with me and that you and Evel put together this contract. You really touched my heart with it." I said "But Evel's sick." I said "He lives right down the street from me and he's dying. He's not doing very good at all and he's not going to be able to do any of those things that he promised you." And Dr. Bohbot had his secretary write me back a little note, a little email back that said "Bob I made a deal with you." He said "I made a deal with Evel but I also made one with you." I wrote you under my name in my honor that I would treat you." And he says "What happened to Evel is not your fault. He's says "When you can get over here the treatment's free."

Michael: Wow.

Bob: That's what an honorable guy...

Michael: And how long ago was that?

Bob: That was two years ago.

Michael: And so all you needed to do was get over there.

Bob: Yeah. That's it.

Michael: I mean are you ready to go?

Bob: I mean I could be ready to go yeah.

Michael: Whenever you're ready.

Bob: Yeah I could be ready to go and I'll make the commitment, I mean I'm in excellent health I'm strong as an ox. There's nothing wrong with me, I have no contractors, and I don't have any sores or anything. Everything works except I can't walk. I'm a perfect candidate for him.

Michael: Dude I'd do it.

Bob: It's going to cost it's going to be several thousand dollars to do that. I have to get a hotel and have a place to go back into the hospital is too small they can't me help me.

Michael: Oh they can't. So you'd have to have board over there.

Bob: Yeah I'd have room and board and need a vehicle to get back and forth.

Michael: And what city is it in?

Bob: It's a little town north of Paris. It's probably about a 45 minute drive.

Michael: I mean have you done any like online research where you could stay if you could get over there.

Bob: Oh yeah Dr. Bohbot's already told me where I could stay. There's several hotels around.

Michael: What's it going to cost you total to do that for two years?

Bob: We're dealing with the euro over there. I would imagine those hotel are going to be \$85 to \$105, \$120 a night.

Michael: Well you wouldn't stay in a hotel for two years; you'd get an apartment or something.

- Bob: Well I don't know how to do that. I mean I probably would and there might be some deals around, but there again they might not be wheelchair accessible. I mean it's hard enough to find wheelchair accessibility in the United States.
- Michael: Ah man, I'm sure you can find someone who knows it.
- Bob: The reason I haven't really searched that because I was wanting to wait. Wanted to wait until I get my jet trike.
- Michael: Oh okay I got you.
- Bob: I wanted to have the money so I can go over there and do it right. I wanted to talk to Branson about a lot of things. I like to have him be a money sponsor and also an airline sponsor so that every two weeks I could fly back to the States and do my shows and then fly back from there and have two weeks of treatment. And I want him to get all wrapped up in that.
- Michael: I got you. Yeah that makes sense.
- Bob: If I could get the man in front of me for 30 minutes I know that he would do it.
- Michael: Branson.
- Bob: Yeah.
- Michael: Yeah. You'll have only one time to sell him.
- Bob: And I know that. And I don't need to pair myself ranting I'm just like you know that I mean I can talk to you all day long and I can do the same to him. I don't get stage fright. I would go in there and I would be honest with him and sincere and tell him what I'm doing and what I'm trying to do and I'm trying to get people around the world to be able to walk that need it that can't afford it. I want to build a fantastic hospital and I want Dr. Bohbot to be in charge of research and development.
- Michael: This is what I don't understand. Like I saw pictures of it...
- Bob: Yeah.
- Michael: ...but for someone not in that game the motorcycle and all that I see this picture of this thing and I'm like how is that vehicle going to

be your vehicle going to be your vehicle for money and sponsors. I don't understand and it didn't come across to me. You're going to have to make it clear how is that your ticket to all this?

Bob: Here's the games that I want to play it in. My history alone will get the press to cover it. When they see the Ryder commercial, which was the Number 1 commercial, and they see all the things the World Record thing and all that stuff, my history and my age about doing it. All I want the jet trike to do and I'd like to make my very first run on Las Vegas Boulevard on New Years' Eve. And I know enough people that I think I can get that pulled off. And they're game for that kind of stuff.

Michael: Alright and a run, what does a run look like?

Bob: Like a burnt out and turn the jets on and make it go 100 mile an hour and just turn it off. Make it make a bunch of noise, shoot a bunch of fire in the air and noise and do a big like funny car burn out and my history and all behind it. Now I know what it's going to lead to it's going to lead to going on national TV on like the Fox morning thing that they have, Good Morning America or all those kind of things. That the first person is going to be "Bob Gill you're 64-years-old, why would you want to do this?" And the answer is it's because of my foundation, my foundation to get people to walk again.

Michael: And then you got to great story your career and all that. Okay but what's so cool about seeing that thing do a burn out and only going 100 miles an hour compared to you jumping over 18, 22 cars?

Bob: Because of the fact it's going to be night time, it's going to be fire and smoke and noise above imagination. The jets would be pointed straight up in the air shooting colored fire out like 35 feet in the air. And the rear tire will be shooting fire and it'll be on Las Vegas Boulevard. Are you kidding? That would bring back the era of the '70s when exhibition cars used to run.

Michael: Well it's kind of like when the Blue Angels come...

Bob: Right.

Michael: ...they've got those huge rocket trucks and stuff.

Bob: Right.

Michael: So people are into that.

Bob: Yeah they are. And this thing will be so monstrous it'll be so noisy and it'll be so high tech it's going to be driven by us. Not a steering wheel but a joystick forward to go, back to back up.

Michael: You're in a fire suit.

Bob: Oh absolutely yeah. Jim Dees who builds all the fire suits and all the parachutes for all the funny car guys, the dragster guys, he's actually a friend of mine. I've known him for many, many, years. He's still at it he's 84-years-old and comes to work every day.

Michael: Yeah that's great.

Bob: Yeah and he told me he'll build me a fire suit and then do the whole interior to work any flames or anything to put them all out to help and I'll be as safe as can be.

Michael: Well you mentioned something that you wanted to call it the...what did you want to call it?

Bob: We want to run two. We want to run the jet trike against a bat mobile but a bat mobile body that's got a big jet in the middle of it and a V8 in the front. We can run exhibition runs at drag strips that's what we want to do with it.

Michael: But Warner Brothers what?

Bob: Warner Brothers won't let you call it the bat mobile.

Michael: Well you know what, I'm interviewing a guy on Tuesday he's a licensing expert. When Batman 1 came out...

Bob: Yeah.

Michael: ...he cut his teeth on all the licensing deals, not all of them, but a good majority of all the licensing deals on Batman.

Bob: See that's what we need we need somebody on the inside.

Michael: You need a good licensing guy someone like that maybe could get you the license for it.

Bob: Yeah it's possible.

Michael: So you license it.

Bob: Yeah. We were just going to put Neil my buddy that has a better deal we was just going to put Clinton in this batman outfit, which is the original one that Adam West wore in the series he's got the original one, and have him drive the car with the batman outfit on. And you don't have to say batman or bat mobile we were going to call it Bat Car and people were going to pick up on what it is. We would have his original one with us anyway on our tour.

Michael: Yeah that may not fly with Warner Brothers. But look, just like all the people who wanted your name, your implied endorsement you could do the same thing with anything. I'm really into this licensing stuff. I'm trying to learn as much as I can.

Bob: Wow that's cool.

Michael: I mean imagine if you have the license to put the Warner Brothers batman on the side of that thing then you bring all that credibility right there. That's huge.

Bob: I would love that if that could happen.

Michael: That's powerful. I mean that's exactly what all your sponsors wanted from you.

Bob: Yeah. Well, see what you can do with that.

Michael: I will. I'm interviewing the guy on this Tuesday the licensing and this stuff is kick ass. So much more we could talk about for sure and we will, we'll do another one. But I do want to send you the laser guy interview.

Bob: Okay.

Michael: I'll make notes of what I need to get you but the guy does the interview is Joe Polish he's real hooked in with Richard Branson. He's just an online marketing guy.

Bob: That would be so cool. If I could just get in front of him I wouldn't know what to do man. I know one thing I won't have stage fright because I will pitch him exactly what I want him to do.

Michael: Yeah you can do it you just got to know who Bob Gill is real quickly and understand it. So for anyone listening if someone wants to check out your Web site and your foundation how could they do that?

- Bob: Go to [www.thebobgillfoundation.org](http://www.thebobgillfoundation.org).
- Michael: Alright and what's your Web site if someone wants to see that cool documentary video?
- Bob: That's on [www.bobgilldaredevillegend.com](http://www.bobgilldaredevillegend.com).
- Michael: Alright man let's wrap it up for now.
- Bob: Okay sounds good to me.
- Michael: Thank you very much I really, really, enjoyed this.
- Bob: Thank you so much and I appreciate it and I hope we can do some more things together and you helping me with this project I really appreciate it man.
- Michael: Yeah I love to do it.
- Bob: And soon as I get to Southern California you and I are going to have some beers and some chicken wings man.
- Michael: Alright that sounds good Bob.
- Bob: Alright take care.
- Michael: Thank you bye.
- Bob: Bye-bye.

There is a procedure called Laser Puncture being done by Dr. Albert Bohbot in France that will help him walk again. Dr. Bohbot and his procedure have been featured in many Discovery Channel and BBC Network documentaries.

Dr. Bohbot has had success in over 500 of these miraculous procedures, with para and quadriplegics who had far worse injuries than Bob Gill's.

Please help Bob by going to <http://www.thebobgillfoundation.org>

For more interviews like this go to [www.HardToFindSeminars.com](http://www.HardToFindSeminars.com).