



My Life Downhill

By MARC MCCRUDDEN

Some simple comparisons can be made between filmmaking and downhill skateboarding. Both involve a journey that begins with a stepping-on point, a commitment, putting both feet in (or on, as the case may be with the skateboard), and both conclude with a stepping off, an end. At some point the ride is over. For filmmakers the end of the ride signifies a time to export your project, put it on a DVD and let the seeds you've sprinkled throughout your work come to life and hopefully connect with an audience. Your baby has been born, so to speak, and it's time to see if she can fly. Am I talking about flying babies? Yes, I am! With downhill skateboarding the end of every ride gives way to a reflection on the way back to the top. There's always another ride, another line, another perspective or approach to our favorite, or most conveniently safe hill. Everything moves forward and continues to evolve, sometimes at a pace a little too slow for our liking and sometimes faster than we can keep up with. And while the moments captured on film remain to serve as a record, like the memories of a perfect ride, it's important to share them, to take the time to tell the stories to each other and reflect on the details of something that sometimes is just a moment in time.

By the time this article is published we will have premiered our film "Drop: My Life Downhill," at the Rickshaw Theatre in Vancouver, B.C., to an amazing group of riders, fans, skateboard company owners and in-

dustry employees, families, friends, press, peers and wildly fanatical Canadians. We chose to premiere "Drop" in Vancouver specifically to recognize, to respect and to give thanks to those committed to helping create and sustain the amazing energy and perspective that is the scene of longboarding and DH. Many of the people who are the core members of this downhill skateboarding family will be there, and we are nervous, excited and eagerly hopeful to receive their validation. It's important to them and to me how they're represented in the film and their take on the greater work as a whole. It's an interesting moment, because unlike skateboarding having the next ride, the next film is a whole production away. And to be clear, I'm not asking for validation here; we'll know before this article is printed whether we've hit or not. And I won't sugar-coat that we set out to create a great movie with "Drop," something that sets the bar, something the riders are proud to be a part of, something special. So many "action sports" films today are nothing more than 40-minute montages that follow the formula of foxy + music. When we started this project the intention was to capture the sport in new ways, using the right film tools, the best riders and locations, with the plan to tell a great story. It's the working model for every great film in Hollywood, and I wanted to apply to it the cultural phenomenon that is rooted in the vibe of downhill skateboarding to see what we could do.





Like any journey, this production has had its bumps and challenges, but it has been worth every second of time, every resource, every phone call, every dollar spent, every mile driven, every interview and every ride we've shot. It's been an honor to work with such a centered and positive group of people who truly know and understand themselves and are a thousand times more passionate and determined about spreading the thrill and exhilaration of longboarding than they are conscious of their appearance or vanity on camera. It's been incredibly refreshing for me personally, living and working in Los Angeles as I do, where narcissism is more contagious than the swine flu. So I thank each and every rider for trusting me with their stories and for giving me their focus and style.

This might start to sound like an awards-show acceptance speech, but it's important to let people know who is responsible for making this film happen and supporting this sport we love so much. I want to thank our sponsors, especially Chris Chaput from Abec 11, who invested in my vision when it was a verbal idea, and then after seeing how we executed our ideas, made it possible for us to return to Maryhill in 2009 to help complete our story. I want to thank Tom Edstrand and the whole Landyachtz crew for stepping up and supporting us in a big way. I want to thank Michael Brooke from this amazing magazine, *Concrete*

Wave, who selflessly does more for the sport than anyone will ever know; thank you for your guidance and support. I want to thank Silverfish Longboarding for always believing in our films and for spreading the stoke to all of us online. Thanks to Airflow Skateboards and Chris Hart, who's been a big supporter and is representing for us in Switzerland and Europe. I want to personally thank John Ozman and Volcanic Promotions for all he's done with the Maryhill Festival of Speed. John has had my back from day one and is a big part of taking these events to the next level. And thanks to Marcus Rietema and Bob Ozman from the IGSA, who are beyond dedicated to helping maintain and grow the foundation of the organized racing side of the sport: You both bring a credibility and professionalism to the sport while relating to and representing the riders in so many positive ways. It's been an honor to tell your story.

To all the riders from every corner of the globe, we have a special thing here with this sport and with this group of people. It is our shared love of something that has become infectious, and we should be proud of what we're accomplishing. People like Bricin Lyons are the epitome of this energy, creating in Canada such a huge population of riders who are organized, safe and friendly within their communities. To simply love something is enough, but to share it is something else. ■

