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## Life On One Wheel

*Rick Nasty  
Gets Dirty  
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# STOPPIE THAT NONSENSE

## The Nasty Side of Street Bike Freestyle

by Bryan Munson

Somewhere, things are falling apart. DISBELIEF is screaming that there has been a theft, that some poor, unsuspecting structure has been relieved of its necessary hardware. If you listen close, you can probably hear the metallic clangs of screws, nuts, and bolts crashing into one another as they race against imagination, waiting for that illusive yet perfect moment when an improbable – nay *impossible* – thought quietly becomes reality.

We'd all like to believe some of that moxie wasn't all eaten up by our cover boy, Rick Payne. Although, when you slice up the pie, logic begins to beat up on wishful thinking, and in turn, beat some sense back into your head. Because screws loose or not, I wonder: how many of us would actually think to do a wheelie and top it off by standing on the crash cage, not look where we are going, point real cocky-like at the camera, all while moving – AND THEN SOMEHOW GET BACK DOWN (only to have to do it over again five times because this journalist was too dumbfounded to get a good picture)?

Survey says... not you. Okay, probably not me either, but I felt really cool hanging around a guy that actually did, so allow me to bask in his glory for a few minutes.

Self-deprecation is often the way to a career in comedy, but Payne, better known as Rick Nasty, isn't feeling bad about himself, and he's certainly not up for games. At 21 years old and acknowledged as one of the top ten street bike freestyle riders in the country, he can't be.

I know I have talent, but I'm not into looking cool," he says. "I'm trying to do big things."

The arrival of serious stunt riding in America has materialized only within the last 15 years or so. Sport bikes started to generate big sales for dealers in the late 1980's, gaining popularity around the time moviegoers saw Tom Cruise tearing through Miramar, CA, on one in *Top Gun*. Riders in Europe had already been on sport bikes and developing tricks for a while when in the mid-1990's, a team from Ohio called the Starboyz emerged, and started making movies of themselves doing stunts. That changed everything and "really pushed the street bike revolution," Nasty says.

"If you think back four years ago, there was really only like fifteen tricks in America that people were doing on these bikes," he said. "But stateside 2005, there's now at least a hundred. I think when the Starboyz brought their game to Bike Week around 1998, and people saw them doing tricks up and down A1A, they knew something larger was up."

The buzz created by the Starboyz began to spread, and soon other American teams were popping up, mastering the already existing tricks and innovating some of their own. Triple Xtreme out of South Florida, 1096 out of Michigan, and DTE out of Boston are widely considered to be the second generation of great stunt riders, and they inspired Nasty to push himself and many others to the next level.

But let's rewind four years. Nasty has only stunting since 2001. Having had a taste of the available videos, he was already thinking hard about trying his hand at it, but it wasn't until he moved to Florida for college and met his Purebred Riders teammate Brandon Ulrich that he got serious. Ulrich (who was recently featured in an episode of MTV's *True Life: I Live to Ride*) had already been working on his stunt repertoire at that time. When they found out the direction each wanted to go, he and Nasty got together and dedicated day after day for six months to learn every trick that was out there until they got to the point where they were doing the same tricks the elite teams were doing.

The proliferation of freestyle has been so quick in the last few years," Nasty says, "because the rider doesn't necessarily have to have 'raw talent' in the traditional sense. What I mean is that, you don't have to be a 'superior being' to do [stunts]. People thought these guys were super-human. When they all got in the spotlight, the demographics were spread out, so people thought it was only a few elite guys able to do it.

"But the qualities that allow them to be good at riding translate to the other things they do in life, both physical and otherwise. There are times when that raw talent helps in freestyle, but what I think it comes down to is practice, practice, practice. It's not for everybody, but the guys who took the first steps had the imagination, the style, and the guts to follow through on their ideas, and they got guys like me to believe that we could actually do it, too."

Purebred Riders has emerged as one of the elite teams on the street bike freestyle scene. Before the free tires, helmets, gloves, brake pads and body work, though, Nasty

and Ulrich could bank on no one but each other to support their dream.

"We've contributed to a revolution to [the point that] there are only a few guys superior to us," Rick says. "Ever since we came out, there's probably been 100 to 300 different teams that followed our lead by saying 'this is not impossible, there is a way.' But it wasn't always like that. We were struggling for money in the beginning. After we decided we were good enough to

There's no doubt that a proper show during the biggest bike rally in the world has the potential to show an older generation what their younger counterparts are doing on today's machines. A safe and well-organized show would also lend more credence to Nasty's claims that not all sport bikers are nuts. They may indeed have a few extra bolts in need of tightening to be pushing speeds of 160 mph, but he says there exist elements of safety and control that most outside the culture dismiss as a reckless line of bull. An exhibition with riders from all over the country convening peacefully, harboring only the intention of doing impossible things is familiar – almost akin to the revelry that has become Bike Week. Shows in Europe draw 20,000 people. Asking for that many when there's an extra 600,000 in town shouldn't be a problem, Nasty says confidently.

There is something that drives certain people the level of success he's attained thus far, and you can see it when he's teetering on his front tire at 50 miles an hour, sitting on a specially reinforced windshield, daring the bike to nose over but not willing to relinquish to fear by falling off. Witnessing the product of such dedication, watching how cool a no-handed wheelie is makes trying to take pictures impossible. Yet, impossible is what guys



Rick Nasty and his stoppie skills

like Nasty thrive on. compete, we had to figure out how to get there. Sometimes we'd leave Florida for Michigan with just enough money to get there and get a hotel. We'd HAVE to win, or else we weren't making it back. People saw that; they saw our drive and our heart. I think around that time, we really made a statement. Where we go from here is nowhere but up."

Purebred spent the latter half of 2002 and all of 2003 competing in any events they could, and spent much of 2004 doing shows across the U.S. and one in South America. They're currently working on a possible trip to Saipan for a show, but they're immediate focus is right here in Florida. Nasty hopes Purebred Riders will get approval from the City of Ormond to hold a show in the Ormond Lanes parking lot during Bike Week (check [www.purebredriders.com](http://www.purebredriders.com) or [www.ricknasty.com](http://www.ricknasty.com) for date and location).

As a thinking people, we like to believe that everything around us impacts our development in some way. This journalist learned in an afternoon that there are pages and pages of life lessons everywhere – in this case, written just long enough in a parking lot by a scrape bar to be absorbed before a Florida rain washed them away.

*Rick wants to thank Scott at Crescent City Customs for the candy paint; Mark at HAI Bike Shop of Orlando for parts, brake pads, oil, tires, helmets, gloves, grip and just about everything else related to making his bike run; Frank Germiah and Tommy Brock for the stellar polish job on the chrome; Ormond Lanes for the practice facility; and Freestyle Ingenuity who supplied the scrape bar and crash cage.*