



frankyMORALES

BY JUSTIN EISINGER / PHOTOGRAPHY BY RYAN SCHUDE



Franky Morales looks like a fucking gangster. Not to be confused with a Polo-flossing hip-hopper or a suburban Eminem clone- there is no mistaking Franky's image as anything but totally genuine. That's because it is. From the lipstick kiss tattoo on his neck, to the .357 emblazoned across his heart, Franky lets his true colors shine through in all their gold-accented glory. And top it all off, he just might be the most responsible professional rollerblader in our industry.

Unlike many professionals who pretend to be offended, distracted or maybe even confused by their fans, Franky remains unfazed. This makes him a valuable marketing commodity. Like a few summers ago at Woodward West. While a group of us ducked the mid-day heat, opting instead to blade once the sun was down, Franky was up every morning at 8 a.m. eating breakfast with the campers, skating all day, skating all night, and then hanging out with the night owls. It was a commendable routine to say the least. Every day while the rest of us kept a low profile, Franky was putting in nine to twelve hours of face time with his sponsor's customers. That's a rare find in this industry of ours.

Don't misinterpret the circumstances; Franky didn't spend all that time with those campers because he was concerned with being a good professional, he did it because he absolutely loves to skate. His personality is that of a pro rollerblader, because that is what he is. No bullshit, no pretense; just full commitment. He got hooked on rollerblading when he was just a kid, and years later that love is more apparent than ever. He's a one-of-a-kind talent in an industry best described as eclectic. Staying true to his own ideas and identity, Franky is inspiration to let true thug niggas see ya heart.

GUEST ARTIST: CHRIS PEEL

PHOTOS BY WES DRIVER

TEXT BY ADAM MORRIS



DAMIEN WILSON (AO MISFIT 360 OUT)

Barely Dead

THE PURR OF URETHANE WHEELS WHIPPING ACROSS SMOOTH ASPHALT REVERBERATED THROUGHOUT A SAN DIEGO SCHOOLYARD AS BRIAN SHIMA PUMPED TOWARD A SKATE PARK-LIKE HIP. DOZENS OF FEET BACK, NEAR THE PLAYGROUND, DOUG URQUHART TRAINED HIS VIDEO CAMERA ON THE ACTION AS SHIMA LAUNCHED OFF ONE EDGE OF THE HIP, TUCKED INTO A FLYING FISH GRAB AS HE SPUN A 270 AND LANDED ON THE OTHER SIDE. AS THE SUN SET ON THAT SESSION IN EARLY MARCH, IT BROUGHT TO A CLOSE ONE OF THE FIRST SHOOTS FOR WHAT – OVER THE NEXT SIX MONTHS AND AFTER HUNDREDS OF MILES OF TRAVELING, COUNTLESS HOURS OF FILMING AND THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS IN EXPENSES – COULD BECOME A LANDMARK IN BLADING'S SHORT HISTORY.



BRIAN SHIMA (TOPSOUL TO AO SOUL)

The goal was to showcase an expansive, insider's view of the sport. The challenge – and perhaps the most vital part – was to share it in a way that most anyone, including those who disrespect or don't understand blading, could digest.

Urquhart's upcoming project, a documentary about blading, called Barely Dead, will trace the history of the sport, from precursors such as quad skating to the first aggressive skates, from the early money and fame of the mid-1990s to the leaner times of today.

The narrative, spliced with skating and portions of interviews from some of the most influential players in blading's past and present, will speak to the adversity blading has faced: the perception among skateboarding and other action sports that bladers are copycats, the sport's search for an identity and acceptance, and the way many talented bladers through these times have stepped away for more financially stable lines of work.

"There are skaters like Chris Haffey, who's trying to get second job – at a smoothie shop. But he can't even get the job because he's traveling too much for rollerblading," Urquhart said. "We'll touch on stuff like that; break down why everyone does what they do... I think the (bladers) who sit down and watch it and take it for what it is will be proud to be a rollerblader."

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At a time when blading may only be starting to recover from the traumas of its past, Barely Dead represents two distinct opportunities: a road map to a better future for the industry, and an opportunity to influence the public's perception of the sport.

By charting the wrong turns and the right ones that led the sport to today, it may guide bladers and skating companies to avoid the mistakes that have already been made. By improving blading's image, it could generate more interest and more participants, which would bring back more money into the sport and could stymie the purging of talented skaters, photographers, filmmakers and artists who essentially have to seek financial asylum elsewhere.



"You have to stop perpetuating the loss of valuable skills... if you want your community to get stronger."

CHRIS HAFFEY {LAUNCH TO BACKSIDE 180 OUT}



NICK WOOD {ROCKET AIR}

"You have to stop perpetuating the loss of valuable skills and resources from your community if you want your community to get stronger," said Justin Eisinger, who Urquhart tapped to write the script for Barely Dead. Eisinger, previously the editor of Daily Bread skate magazine, is the editor of this magazine. "Otherwise it's just like starting over again. We've got to move forward."

Urquhart dived into Barely Dead with one eye to skating and the other to a future career in film.

"On a personal level, I'm about to graduate from Georgia State in December. But this is my last attempt do something really cool and unique and go all out, where I'm a student and before I have a real job," Urquhart said.

Nearly all of the skating was captured with the Super 16mm format motion picture film cameras, which he rented. The interviews were shot on his digital Sony FX-1 high-definition camera.

The 16mm format used to be industry standard for television, he said, and remains in use in such places as the independent film world and snowboarding.

Shooting with the Super 16mm gear was more laborious than it would have been with the Mini DV format cameras used for most of today's big-name skate videos.

Urquhart likened using the heavier, more cumbersome Super 16mm equipment to the experience of the skate photographer, who must assemble the camera gear, compose the shot, position the flashes, focus the lens and, finally, shoot the action.

"Everything is more difficult. There's no power zoom or focus. No shutter speed adjustment," he said. "A big, heavy-ass camera is not as easy to do shoulder mount shots, rolling angles, or 'hard to get' style shots. It is just a hassle, but the results are pretty badass."

The Super 16mm equipment wasn't without unexpected difficulties. For instance, back in that Southern California schoolyard in March, while filming with Brian Shima, Urquhart said, he moved in close to capture a fisheye shot of a second trick only to find the Super 16mm camera malfunctioning.

"The film was all crinkled and cracked and totally destroyed," he said. "That happened numerous times (throughout shooting for Barely Dead), where we had some far out camera error."

Working on Super 16mm was an expensive choice. Urquhart's student status and a previous internship helped him gain discounts on film and developing and

the process of transferring that film to the appropriate digital format. But he estimates he will have spent roughly \$10,000 on the various film costs for Barely Dead. (By comparison, he estimates he spent \$2,000 on his travels, which took him to Southern and Northern California, Alabama, Tennessee, Florida and North Carolina.)

To finance Barely Dead, Urquhart dipped into his savings, used credit cards and redirected much of the money he made from his previous skate DVD, Black Market.

"I easily broke even, but I never really made much of a profit," he said of Black Market. "But just the fact that I made my money back allowed me to re-invest that money back into a new release."

By late August, Urquhart had wrapped up filming and was prepared to begin editing. The motion graphics were finished. He'd secured master tapes from early skate videos, such as Mad Beef, the Hoax and the epic Hoax 2: Anarchy Across America, to use as B-roll. He'd gone through legal channels to make sure Barely Dead's soundtrack would be legitimate.

"At this point production is done but Justin (Eisinger) has still been tweaking the

final script," he said. "So now we have to record the narration and I need to start editing like a mad man."

Plans call for Barely Dead to be a two-disc set. One DVD will contain the documentary. The other will contain skating from the documentary put into short edits, more like a traditional skate video.

After Barely Dead is released this fall, Urquhart plans to enter it in film festivals throughout the world. Through those screenings, there's the chance that Barely Dead will pique the interest of a critic or others in the audience and generate some new, positive attention for blading.

"We're talking incremental increases in visibility. If that means a two-sentence blurb and a little photo in a culture magazine somewhere, that's a step. It's not about taking off, it's about baby stepping. There's a chance it could take off, and a good chance it won't," Eisinger said. "Can we get five new people to give a second look at rollerblading? That, to me, at this point, is all I'm asking... I want everybody to walk away from this film having some sort of a connection to and understanding of this thing the way you and I already do."



15 MINUTES: *the brown brothers* / KNOW DIFFERENCE: THE MOVIE
by wes driver

While in New York I had the chance to sit down and discuss the highly anticipated documentary "Know Difference" with the Brown brothers, Courtney and Chris. It seems times are a-changing. This blading film was selected for the VIBE Urban World Film Festival (past selections include "Hustle & Flow," "Hero," and "Original Kings of Comedy") and won Best New York Documentary at the NYC Independent Film Festival. All before the target audience of rollerbladers has even seen a trailer. Or maybe that's been the plan all along.

The goal of this project is to "expose rolling to a larger audience and show them how we feel it should be perceived," says director Courtney Brown.

Instead of starting small and working outwards, the Brown brothers are taking a fresh approach to skate videos. With major studios interested in distribution and an agent on board, it looks like rolling might have an interesting turn of events in 2007. That's right, 2007. The documentary is still being tweaked and improved, and won't be released until early next year. So by the time it is released, this project will have been in the works for at least a year and half.

"We just want to show people the best we have to offer, and that means taking things slow and doing it right," boasts Courtney. "Just the other day we ran into pro skateboarder Stevie Williams at a party and ended up talking to him about rolling for over two hours. He was down with what we do, and we plan to have him appear in the documentary as well."

In the meantime, the Brown brothers have just finished "Checkmate: Mixtape 3," which will be available for all you kids this Christmas. If the past is any indication of what to expect, I'm sure this film will be playing on your big screen and laptops for months. I, for one, can't wait to see what they do next. Oh wait, that's right, I actually have seen the top secret trailer for "Know Difference." All I can say is someone needs to leak it... and who knows, maybe that someone is me.*

* Sorry guys, but you can't keep something this hot to yourselves.



TREE STALL (SCHUDE)



AMATEUR HOUR: joey g / PHOTOGRAPHY BY RYAN SCHUDE AND WES DRIVER
by wes driver

The first time I heard the name Joey G was about four years ago when Rejects was in NYC working on issue number three. We had made our way out to Jersey, to attend the worst street comp that I've ever witnessed, when I ran into a guy from Long Island who was helping us track down Charles Dunkle, who had somehow gotten lost in a mushroom induced haze. Our helper took this opportunity to recommend that I take some time to investigate this kid named Joey Graziano from his neighborhood back in Long Island. Of course, I hadn't been in New York long, but even by that point I knew that everyone is always promoting and throwing down the sales pitch for their boys. So honestly, I ignored him.

At the time, I was really paying attention to Boschi Pope, Rahmel Knight, and Murda who were killing it as usual. The event was really disorganized and shitty, but one highlight was when Rahmel punched some guy in the mouth for talking too much shit, dropping the guy like a sack of bricks. All I can say is the guy was in need of some dental work after that blow, and I took note to never piss off Rahmel in the future. But this article ain't about the Bronx, it's about the overlooked talent from the city of Long Island.

Fast forward a few years to when I'm living in Brooklyn, and somehow I finally get hooked up with Joey and his friends. I can't believe I'm going to say this, but the hype was true. Not only was Joey a talented skater, but he displayed many uncanny characteristics like always showing up with a new haircut, bringing his friends to my art shows, and driving me around the city in search of skate spots. Joey's willingness to serve as an assistant of sorts helped me accomplish some amazing work.

But now the cat is out of the bag. Not only is there more than one way to get yourself into a magazine such as this, there are all sorts of opportunities rollerblading makes possible that otherwise each of us would miss. Getting to know Joey G. is one of those opportunities I might have missed if our shared commitment to rollerblading hadn't interfered for the better.