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ANATOMY OF A STUNTMAN

ALL ABOUT MIKE BAST



At 21 years of age, Mike Bast has already earned the title of the greatest actor on wheels—motorcycle wheels that is. Mike is the young man who did the impossible stunts of riding over the tops of nine cars (he was told he would only have to go over two), skip-riding over a 12-foot-high chain-link fence and park bench and table, and tearing up and down the outside steps of a downtown building in San Francisco for director Richard Rush in "Freebie and the Bean," the new Warner Bros. comedy-action thriller starring Alan Arkin and James Caan.

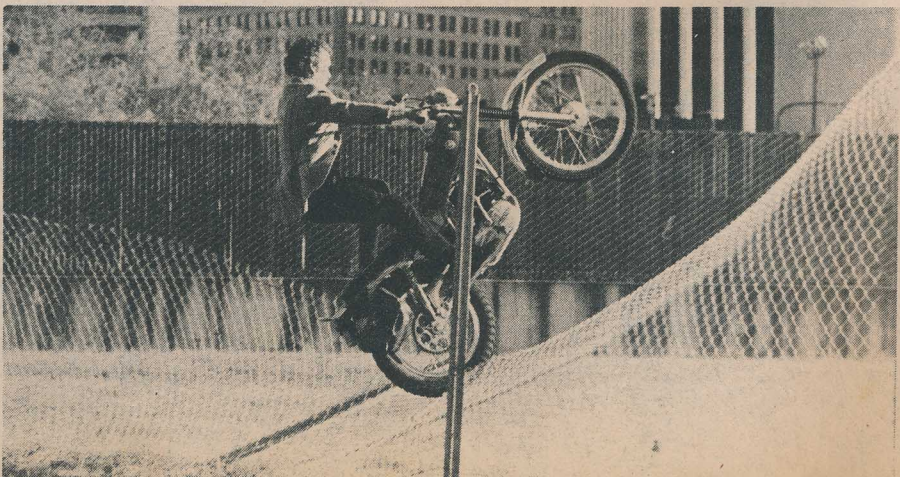
Asked when his motorcycle life began, he answers that he started at the age of five!

"My Uncle Harlan, back from the

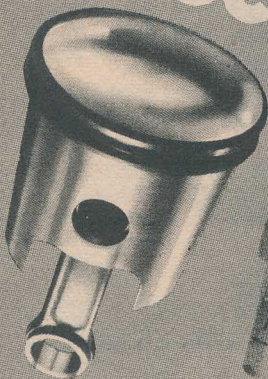
army, got interested in motorcycles and used to take me and my brother Steve—who is two years older and a cycle bug too—for rides on a Triumph. The next year I was taking my uncle for rides!"

It wasn't until he was nine that he got his first bike (a Honda) for dirt racing only and competed in his first race, coming in second against a field of adults. After winning the Hopetown Grand Prix at 13, he graduated to a 200cc Bultaco. For the next two years he made the cycling circuit, climaxed by garnering the Regional Sportsmen's Champion at Prado Park (Riverside) in national competition.

In 1968 he got interested in flat track
(Continued on page 6)



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ANATOMY OF A STUNTMAN (Continued from page 4)

speedway racing (oval dirt tracks) and had to go professional. His first purse came on a warm summer night when he walked away with the third-place prize of \$35 at Whiteman Stadium in Pacoima.

Like Mike himself, the next six years moved fast and prizes kept coming in. Consider the following:

1970—Placed third in the National Champion (Orange County) and second in California Champion (L.A. Sports Arena)

1971—At 18 and still attending Birmingham High in the San Fernando Valley, he won National Champion of Speedway and his first \$1,000 purse.

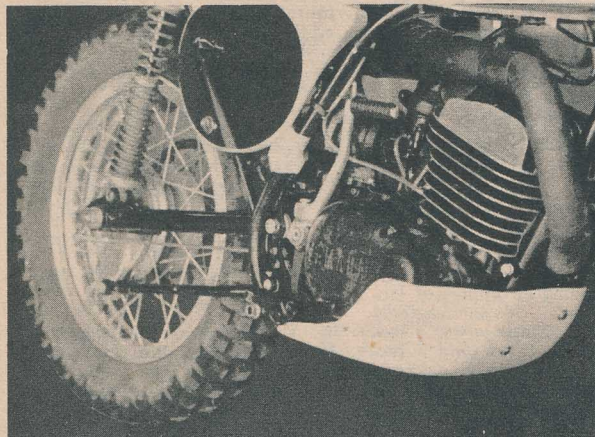
1972—Defending his National Championship, he came in second, but still held the record as high-point rider of the nation.

1973—He achieved the ultimate, becoming the first motorcyclist to win the Triple Crown: California State Champion (Bakersfield); West Coast Champion for the second consecutive year (Ventura); and National Champion (Orange County), along with holding his title of high-point rider of the year. With his older brother Steve, he went to Australia and won the best pair in Sydney competition.

1974—Though out of a few races from early September to mid-October, he is still high-point rider of the year.

His regular schedule is full. He races five nights a week on California tracks from San Diego to Napa. He has won 55 main events this year, more than all other winners added together.

How did he get his first movie break doing stunts in "Freebie and the Bean"? Director Rush, who at the time was

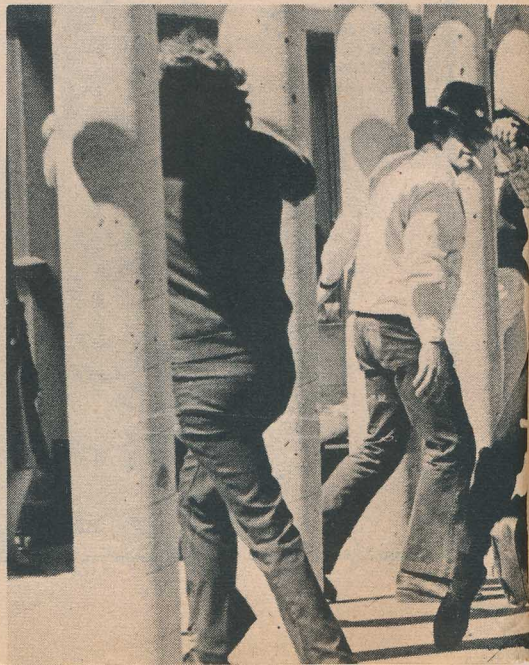


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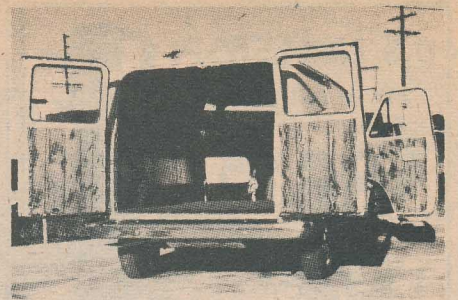
preparing the picture, had taken his son Tony's mini-bike to a mechanic. Rush asked the mechanic if he knew of a good rider who could do the impossible on two wheels. Later the mechanic called his friend Bass and asked him if he knew of such a guy. Mike said he thought so, all the time saying to himself, "I'm that guy." He called Rush, tested by stunt-riding a bike on the studio back lot, and won the assignment. Mike then proceeded to bone up on his role by riding over the top of an old rusty abandoned Buick on the desert until one day he got "took"—some guy came and told him he wanted 200 clams for damages done to his car. Mike paid.

In the film Mike rides a Montesa. Besides being paid for what he likes to do best, he struck up a warm friendship with Arkin, Caan and Rush, who is now a phone pal.

What does Mike drive around town? A four-wheel automobile. Asked why not a motorcycle, he replied, "Hell, the streets are too dangerous."



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