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ON THE COVER: Jimmy Lewis flirts with disaster for Joe Kosch and Situation Impossible. The modified 200s take to the air for JoPapa, and John Ker snapped the XR/CR hybrid photo. Tasteful cover design by DeWest, separations by Valley Film and anti-gravity machine by Super Hunky.



Everyone loves an adventure. It's one of the main reasons we ride dirt bikes. It's just that some rides thrust a bit more adventure on us than we're looking for. We look back on these rides as the most fun, but we take great care to never repeat a single feature of them. In memory, a truly horrible ride is fantastic. For those hours—or days—that you're living it, all of your worst fears are realized. On a really awful ride you'll discover your riding buddies' worst fears, too.

There's a fairly direct relationship between a rider's thirst for adventure, his riding ability and his ability to get into trouble. We sought out riders of exceptional ability, with a common thirst for adventure that makes Jacques Cousteau look like a couch potato, to ask them about their most memorable rides. Come with us as we ride with Malcolm Smith, Scott Summers, Danny LaPorte, Bruce Ogilvie and Jack Penton—riders of incredible ability who all went out for a little adventure and arrived at *Situation: Impossible*.

**MALCOLM SMITH'S MATCHLESS ONE-WAY TRAIL RIDE**

"I have a reputation for getting into places I can't get out of, so it's hard for me to pick just one ride that turned out to be the most difficult situation. I would say the worst *types* of ride I've been on are those where you don't get to ride back, those where you have to hike out and then go back with friends to get the bike out.

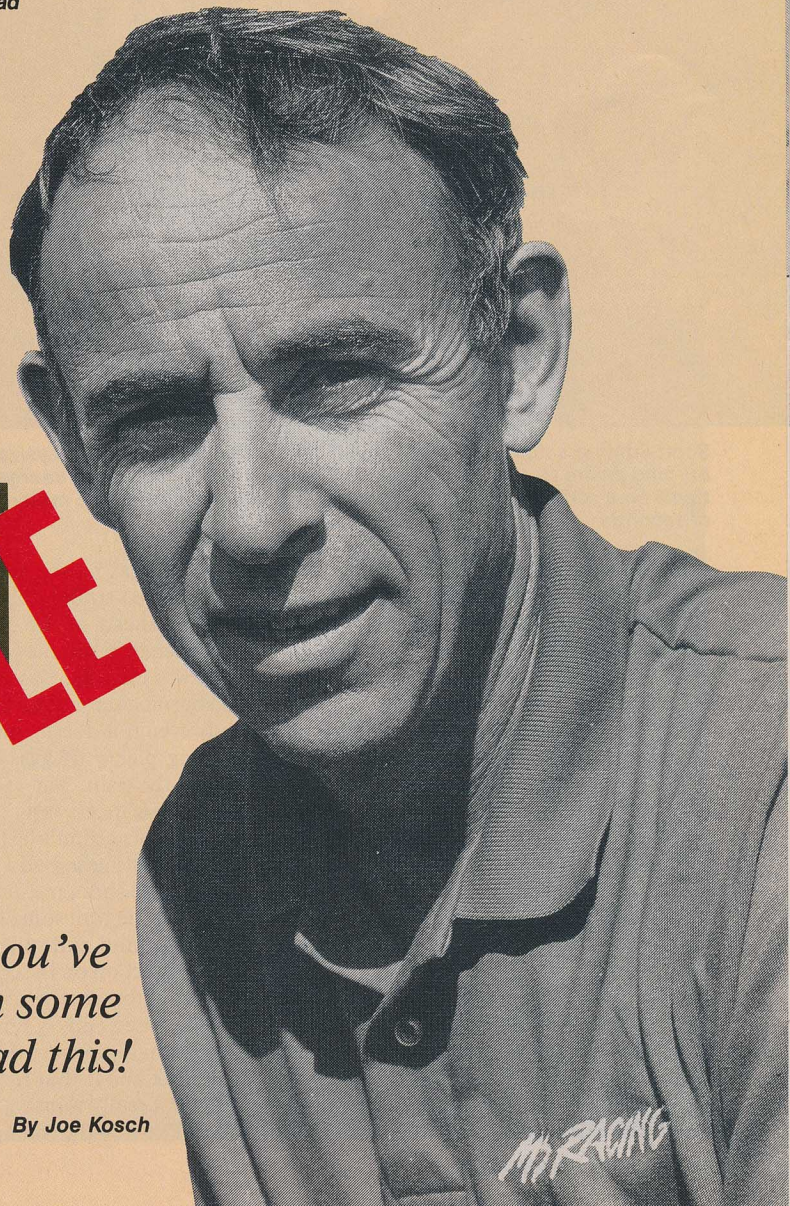
◀ *Ever had a ride where you ended up in an impossible situation? Well, you're not alone!*

"One ride in that category stands out for me. I was on a Matchless single. It was about 1960 and I was riding in the San Bernardino Mountains in California, following a firebreak down a canyon. Well, the riding was really great and at the time it seemed like a good idea to descend into the bottom of the canyon. There had been some heavy rain around that time and, though it was good and muddy, I just figured I'd get out. It was a lot worse than I expected when I reached the bottom. After a bunch of tries I realized I wasn't leaving that canyon—not on the bike, anyway. The Matchless didn't take to the mud too well. Of course, it was dark by the time I'd given up on the bike, and I had to climb out on foot in complete darkness. I was way out there, so there were no lights or signs of life for miles, even after I managed to reach the top of the ridge. It's a miracle I didn't just walk off the edge of another ridge somewhere along the way

back. I was still a long way out once the going got a little easier, so I had plenty of time to think of ways to retrieve the bike.

"There was no hope of getting a tow truck anywhere within range of the bike, so there was no chance of getting it out that way. I thought that there was a chance of riding the bike out if the weather turned cold. The mud would be solid enough to ride on then. I got lucky. It was horribly cold the next day. That didn't get my friends too excited about taking a long early-morning ride out to the middle of nowhere, but I got a few of them to come out with me to retrieve the bike. As it turned out the mud froze, but not enough to make an escape from the canyon possible. We wound up taking the bike apart and carrying the wheels, frame and engine out piece by piece. Then, we put it back together at the top of the ridge. That was one of the strangest ways I've ever ended a ride. We had a fun ride on the way back, though."

*Malcolm can recall a few rides that were so bad they take the smile off his face. That's bad!*



**SITUATION  
IMPOSSIBLE**

*Think you've been in some tight spots? Read this!*

By Joe Kosch



*Scott Summers rides like a raging bull because of his awesome physical strength and a burning desire to win. Another kind of burning extinguished his interest in winning a national hare scrambles championship and even his desire to ride motorcycles in a matter of seconds.*

*Photo by Dave Coombs*

### SCOTT SUMMERS' SCORCHING HARE SCRAMBLES RIDE

"The points spread at the final race of the '89 National Hare Scrambles Series was so close among myself, Ed Lojak and Scott Plessinger that I had to win that race to win the championship. Somehow, I started almost dead last so I rode as hard as I could to catch the leaders. My pit signaled me that my lap times were good, so I just kept pushing. At the 1-1/2-hour mark I was third. At about that time I had to come in for gas and I saw Lojak ride into the pits at the same time. All I could think about was beating him out of the pit. I wanted to get out of there fast.

"When my tank was full, I just put the cap on . . . well, I thought I did, anyway . . . and rode off. I must have been looking over at Lojak or something, so I guess I never got the cap on the threads. Not far out of the pit there were some big bumps, and I felt

a wave of gas hit my chest. A gallon must have blasted straight up and hit me. I was looking ahead so the cap might not have even been on when the geyser hit me. I knew what was coming. Gasoline causes a really bad burning sensation on tender parts of the body even if it doesn't catch fire, and I was wearing plenty of gas. I just thought I'd handle the pain. The race was too important to sacrifice.

"That plan didn't last too long. The gas had me hurting so bad I just wished somebody would shoot me. I remembered seeing a lake off the trail some distance back, so I turned around and rode wide open in the wrong direction on the course. I jumped off the bike before it even stopped and dove into the lake. It was pretty humiliating, and losing the championship was no fun, either. I still think about that race now and then—not that I really want to, but it comes back to me. I've won the championship since, but

I could have a third championship today if I'd just put the gas cap on right!"

### DANNY LaPORTE'S BRUSH WITH DEATH IN THE DUNES

"Last year in the Pharaoh's Rally in Egypt, just days before the United States bombed Khadafi, my teammate Stephan Peterhansel and I were riding north along the Libyan border. We were making our way through a narrow pass and a military truck appeared. We had no choice but to stop, and we honestly didn't know what to expect. I just remember thinking that I wanted to be anywhere else in the world at that moment. It was too bad to be real. I felt like I was in the worst-possible situation. I'm not sure what the military had been told to do with rally competitors, but the guys in that truck looked pretty crazy. You have to understand also that, out there, they can make up the rules as they go along, so we were scared. They yelled at us in French, asking what country we were from, and there I am with a big American flag sticker on the front of the fairing on my bike. I thought they'd shoot me so I yelled back, 'I'm French, I'm French, let us go!' in French. They let us go, but it didn't look good there for a while.

"As if that wasn't enough, near the start of the '91 Paris-Dakar Rally at a gathering of the riders and drivers in Tripoli, who shows up but Khadafi himself, to shake hands with the racers. I hid in the Yamaha truck.

"I've been in riding situations where it certainly seemed possible I might die out there, 200-mile stretches of dunes, each one a pin-it-or-sink hill with wind-sculpted drop-away ledges on the other side, that sort of stuff—but at least you know you have some control over your survival. Even if you got hurt, at least you'd be alive. Facing a pack of gun-toting America-haters—that's scary!"

### BRUCE OGILVIE'S DEMOTION FROM BAJA RACER TO FARMHAND

"Back in '78 I was doing some pre-running for the Baja 1000 in an open running section. Open running areas were just that—you could take any route you wished from one check to another, separated by one of these sections. There was no marked course. It paid to explore as much of these areas as you could because there were so many different ways to get through. Some were great. Many looked great and were actually pretty bad down the trail a bit. You could spend two days pre-running 30 miles because you were trying to get to know a 30-mile square of territory rather than a single 30-mile path. Baja is much more populated today, so open running sections aren't used anymore. They made the racing and pre-running really interesting, and a lot of the good routes are roads today because racers found them. That year, pre-running one particular open running section wasn't just interesting—it was bizarre.

"I was out there, exploring around, about five or six miles from what could be consid-



**Former World 250 Motocross Champion Danny LaPorte is used to having others gunning for him out on the track. In rally racing in the politically volatile Mideast he's had to avoid live rounds, not just serious competition—as if controlling a 400-lb. rally bike isn't hard enough by itself.**

**It seems more natural to see former Baja 1000 and Barstow-to-Vegas winner Bruce Ogilvie rolling across the dirt on a motorcycle at high speeds than rolling in it with a 400-lb. pig, but he's done both. He doesn't let his status as a major figure in off-road racing keep him from enjoying the satisfaction of down-to-earth manual farm labor. ►**

ered the course on a 250 Harley, a bike based on the motocross 250. It was a reliable machine for the most part, but we had trouble with the piston. The piston ring locator pin would come out once in a while, then the ring would spin and catch on the exhaust port. Once that happened the ring would break and, because there was just one ring, you'd have no compression. Occasionally, a chunk of piston would break loose, too, but it didn't matter much. Once the ring snapped, the bike was dead.

"It was around 10 a.m., and the pin popped out in a place where no one would come by. I knew just what had happened.





**Bruce Ogilvie, one of the few riders in the world whose riding stories are 100 percent true.**

The bike was running great, then *boooooom!* I sat there for a bit thinking about how I knew this could happen and that I should have expected it to happen in the most remote area I'd ride to, like it did. I started pushing. By some stroke of luck, or so I thought at the time, I spotted a building about three miles away so I pushed the bike toward it. It turned out to be a ranch house and I saw they had a pickup truck. Things were looking up.

"There was a large Mexican woman at the ranch house with her two sons. In my broken Spanish I tried to get them to give me a ride back to Mexicali. I offered them money and tried to explain that I needed to return to civilization and contact my team. My chase crew was in Borrego, about 70 miles south. They didn't seem to be in a hurry to do anything and, since it was a good 30 miles to the nearest highway and at least another 30 to Mexicali, they weren't excited about the drive.

"It looked like I'd be spending some time with these people, and the more I looked at them the less excited I was about being there. The woman looked vaguely like a man. One of her sons was as thin as a rail and had pink toenails. The other was seriously obese and round like a ball.

"The round son decided it was a good time to round up their pigs, and I became part of the pig-catching team. We spotted the first pig, a big 400-pounder, and the round son grabbed a rope, swinging it around like a rodeo guy. Well, I've been on farms and I'd never seen anybody make a serious attempt to capture a pig by roping its head. I was laughing to myself, thinking no way, when the big guy makes his first toss and lassos the pig. Then the two sons start yell-



**Jack Penton's impressive rides aboard the dirt bikes that bore his name helped to popularize the then-new machines in the United States in the '70s. He ran into a situation at a Texas qualifier that stopped all riders, no matter how impressive they or their machines were.**

ing at me and I gather that Mr. Pink Toenails and I are the pig-tackling part of the team. So we tackle the pig and tie its feet and lift the monster into the pickup, none of which is a big hit with the pig. I thought, well, 20 or 30 minutes per pig, we'll be done in a few hours.

"I'm all ready to hunt down pig #2, but the brothers decide to take a little break. We head back to the house where we share some beer from the family fridge. With no electricity for miles, it's not doing much but the brothers seemed to think it was appropriate to celebrate our pig-catching progress so far.

"We returned to pig catching after our break, and it was clear that the round brother had lost his touch with the rope, to the extent that he gave up on it in favor of a three-man tackling method. Each pig took progressively longer to capture and lift onto the truck, probably because each capture called for another break back at the house. The brothers enjoyed the whole process, even the occasional blast of pig exhaust, which made them even less pleasant to hang around with. We got the last of the six or eight pigs on the truck by around 6 p.m. Once the loading was done, we hopped into the truck and headed for town. I offered repeatedly, but the woman wouldn't accept any money for the ride. I saw some usable-looking routes on our trip back, too."

**JACK PENTON ESCAPES BECOMING JACK PONTON**

"I've found myself in some tough spots but, at an ISDT qualifier at Fort Worth, Tex-

as, I rode into some conditions where I really feared for my life. There had been heavy rains the night before the event, and it was still raining fairly hard when I left the start. We had no idea at the time, but a flash flood was in progress and the course led us into a particularly hazardous spot, given the conditions. Just a few miles out we came to a river. I slowed to consider some possible lines across and realized the river wasn't the broad, shallow thing it looked like at first. It was extremely swollen and was running well beyond its normal banks. At about that time, I saw a rider and a motorcycle tumbling side-over-side with the current down the river. Malcolm Smith and Carl Cranke arrived at about the same spot I did, and they apparently had seen bikes and men tumbling downstream also. Carl rode off, hoping to find a wide, shallow crossing, and ended up drowning his bike twice, pretty much destroying the engine. He came back to where we were. By then, people had gathered on the banks hoping to dive in and save drifting riders. We looked at each other, stunned by the whole scene and saying, 'This is impossible,' something none of us is well-known for saying.

"We returned to the start and just told the organizers that it was too bad out there to run the race. It was life-threatening. The qualifier was postponed but some people had already destroyed or lost their bikes. Later that day the same river was passable. It may have only risen drastically for a matter of minutes, but that river was the scariest thing I've ever seen on a race course." □

Photo by DPPi